

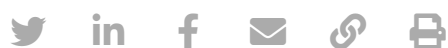


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Environmental group criticizes state's draft solid waste plan

BY: **AMANDA GOKEE** - AUGUST 31, 2022 5:08 PM



The Department of Environmental Services is reviewing feedback on its solid waste plan. (Dana Wormald | New Hampshire Bulletin)

The state's new solid waste plan will set the direction on how it handles trash for the next 10 years. A [draft](#) of that plan has been criticized by the Conservation Law Foundation, an environmental advocacy organization, for its lack of deadlines and clear deliverables.

The Department of Environmental Services is now reviewing feedback on its plan. Director of Waste Management Mike Wimsatt said the department will incorporate comments as appropriate ahead of an Oct. 1 deadline to submit the final plan.

CLF said the plan doesn't provide actionable steps on how to reduce waste and fails to address out-of-state waste, which accounts for 47 percent of the trash entering New Hampshire's landfills.

"The Department of Environmental Services is completely abdicating their responsibility to address out-of-state waste," said Heidi Trimarco, an attorney with CLF New Hampshire. "DES should be committing to do something, anything about out-of-state waste."

Trimarco said that deadlines and timeframes are missing from the plan, and it fails to assign responsibility so it's unclear who is supposed to take action. "It's full of exploring ideas," she said. "That's not good enough."

The plan is meant to guide the state's management of solid waste over the next 10 years. Currently the state is using a plan from 2003.

"The public comment period just closed last week, and we've received a lot of very carefully crafted comments from a lot of parties, including CLF," Wimsatt said. "The comment period was to do just that – to seek the public's thoughts about this draft."

Wimsatt said the plan was the result of input and discussion from a group of around 20 stakeholders who are part of the state's solid waste working group. He declined to comment on the state's responsibility regarding out-of-state waste, citing ongoing litigation on the issue.

The draft plan sets eight goals for solid waste management and recommends five strategies for achieving these goals. The goals include reducing how much solid waste is generated and how toxic the waste is, while keeping more materials out of landfills through efforts to reuse or recycle. Tools for accomplishing that include public education and incentive programs.

The state's plan is informed by a [statutory goal](#) of reducing solid waste by 25 percent by 2030 compared to 2018 levels and by 45 percent by 2050. The goal isn't a mandate or binding in any way.

The state has had a goal of reducing waste in state law since 1990 as well as a hierarchy for how the state should deal with waste management, which puts reducing waste at the top of the list and landfilling as a last resort.

But that framework has failed to make significant changes in how the state deals with its trash, according to the plan.

Now, most of the out-of-state trash ends up at the state's three for-profit landfills, and [a proposal to open another commercial landfill in Dalton](#) sparked debate over the state's solid waste management.

Of the 1,956,789 tons of solid waste that ends up in New Hampshire landfills and incinerators, 913,833 tons come from out of state, according to the plan.



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