

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

The governor's 1988 state of the state message emphasizes resource recovery to address the state's solid waste disposal problem. The message suggests that a reduction in the volume of the state's waste stream and an increase in the recovery of wastes would help to drastically reduce the disposal problem. Legislation has recently been enacted to reduce the state's waste stream, such as amendments that were made to the Solid Waste Management Act last year to encourage the development of alternatives to dumping and burning wastes. However, some people think that the act should more clearly encourage the separation of recyclable materials from the waste stream as a method of addressing the solid waste disposal problem.

Further, some counties have suggested that site and source separated materials are currently excluded from the definition of the term "solid waste" under the act, and the vagueness of the term has lead some counties to question whether source and site separated materials should even be addressed in a county's solid waste management plan update. However, before the Department of Natural Resources can approve a plan update, the act requires county plan updates to include information concerning source and site separation of materials. Many think that this discrepancy could be addressed by an amendment to the act that would require plan updates to include information concerning recyclable materials, including source and site separated materials.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

The bill would amend the Solid Waste Management Act to specify that the act would have to be "construed and administered to encourage and facilitate the efforts of all persons engaged in source separation and site separation of material from solid waste." The bill would also require the encouragement and facilitation of "other environmentally sound measures" to prevent materials from entering the waste stream or to encourage the removal of materials from the waste stream. In addition, the act would be amended to further address source and site separated materials by adding a definition of "recyclable materials."

Under the act, counties are required to develop solid waste management plans to assure the collection and disposal of all nonhazardous solid waste generated in a planning area for a 20-year period. The bill would require plan updates to include an analysis or evaluation in regard to recyclable materials.

MCL 299.406, 299.408, and 299.430a

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

According to the Department of Natural Resources, the bill would have no impact on state expenditures. (12-1-88)

ARGUMENTS:

For:

By specifying that the Solid Waste Management Act would be construed and administered to encourage the separation of recyclable materials from the solid waste stream both at the source of the waste and at the disposal site, the bill will promote environmentally conscious efforts to reduce the state's waste stream and it's waste disposal problem. In addition, although the Department of Natural Resources currently requires counties to address site and source separation of materials in county plan updates, the bill will more clearly encourage source and site separation of recyclable materials as a means of preventing certain materials from entering the waste stream by inserting into the act a definition of the term "recyclable material" that will include source and site separated materials.

POSITIONS:

The governor's office supports the bill. (12-1-88)

The Department of Natural Resources supports the bill. (11-30-88)

The Michigan Municipal League supports the bill. (12-1-88)

The Michigan United Conservation Clubs supports the bill. (12-1-88)