

COE agenda 4-5-17

Written by Thomas Brewer, COE President

Glass-to-sand recycling

-According to the Container Recycling Institute, approximately 34% of all glass containers get recycled in our country. States with container deposit legislation experience a significantly higher rate (63%) than those that do not have such legislation (24%). Recycled glass can either be used to create new glass containers or downcycled, which is when a product is recycled into something less valuable, into fiber glass or concrete production. The owner of my restaurant introduced me to the following product (<http://www.digitaltrends.com/cool-tech/beer-bottle-crusher/>) that pulverizes glass bottles into sand. According to O-I Global, the leading glass manufacturer in North America, there is an issue with single-stream recycling separated at MRFs (Material Recovery Facilities). During the separation process, glass tends to be crushed, which lowers the quality and increases the likelihood of downcycling, because large sizes are preferred for reprocessing glass into new containers.

In our county, we have two big problems with glass recycling; first, we have single-stream recycling that goes to a MRF, and second, we have a lot of businesses that do not recycle their glass bottles. I believe this is an important topic worthy of discussion. We have more than one concrete company in our county and multiple bars and restaurants that throw their glass bottles into the trash, which goes into landfills. Would the county be interested in connecting the wasted bottles with the concrete companies? This could either be a partnership between the county, glass waste producers, and concrete companies, in which the county provides transportation and possibly a glass pulverizing machine, or we could see if there is a concrete company that would be willing to do the work without any public assistance.

Plastic bag ban/fee

-Sue emailed me regarding a Navy Joint meeting attended by the Commissioners that had a presentation regarding plastic bags being a problem in the PG county MRF. A representative of Deb Rey asked whether the county was considering a plastic bag ban, and Sue thought we may want to resurface the idea of a ban or fee to the Commissioners.

Earth Day on the Square in Leonardtown

-We plan to set up a table again this year at Earth Day on the Square on Sunday, April 23rd. We should take some time to discuss who will be setting up, manning, and breaking down the table throughout the day, and what we will have to offer as far as visuals and pamphlets. This is an opportunity to advertise for the next agenda item...

Compost bin and rain barrel workshops

-Nicole and I have been in contact with John Groeger, Interim Director of DPW&T, and Nick Zurkan, Solid Waste and Recycling, regarding assistance from Public Works with the transportation of materials for the workshops. We should discuss logistics of the event, such as the best location, how to advertise, if there should be limits to registration, and any other matters that are pertinent to executing a successful event. Hopefully, we can have a similar outcome as we did with the well-attended Woods in Your Backyard Workshop.