

INTRODUCTION

I.1 STATE REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS & CONFORMITY WITH COMAR

Solid waste management regulations and policies exist at the federal, state, and local government levels. Traditionally, the federal government has provided the overall regulatory direction and minimum national standards for protecting human health and the environment. The implementation of these regulations is the responsibility of the state and local governments.

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) administers and implements federal and state solid waste management regulations. Each county is required to prepare and adopt a solid waste management plan which addresses a 10 year planning period. The plan is to be reviewed and updated, if necessary, by the county every 3 years. Upon adoption by the county, the plan is then submitted to MDE for approval.

The *Charles County, Maryland Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan 2011 - 2021*, was prepared in accordance with the requirements of the *COMAR 26.03.03*, a copy of which is provided in Appendix A.

I.2 CHARLES COUNTY RESOLUTION ADOPTING PLAN

The governing authority is the Charles County Commissioners. The *Charles County Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan* was approved and adopted by the Charles County Commissioners as stipulated in Resolution 2014-XX dated XXXX XX, 2014.

I.3 MDE APPROVAL LETTER

The letter approving this *Charles County Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan* from the Maryland Department of the Environment follows [\[to be inserted, once approved\]](#).

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I.4 NATIONAL TRENDS AND FACTORS INFLUENCING SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

More solid waste is produced in the United States of America than any other country. Solid waste generation has almost doubled in the last 20 years despite the increased public awareness of the necessity for waste reduction.

This increase is not only the direct effect of increased population, but the effect of an increase in the per capita waste generation. We generated a daily average of 2.6 pounds of trash per person 20 years ago; today we produce an average of 4.0 pounds.

As a nation, our previous disposal practices underestimated the importance of solid waste management. Improper planning, design, operation, and maintenance of our landfills and incinerators provided a source of air, water, and soil contamination. Today, we realize that appropriate planning, design, operation, and maintenance are essential to reduce the potential of adverse environmental impacts from solid waste facilities.

Throughout our country, many existing landfills and incinerators will close due to stricter regulations. Numerous landfills are nearing capacity; therefore, the need to site new landfills is immediate. However, new landfill sites are limited due to stricter regulations, public concerns, costly environmental controls, and limited space in densely populated areas. Landfill capacity in the older, densely populated areas of the Northeast is declining. An increasing amount of waste generated in the Northeast is being transported to Midwestern and Southern States for disposal.

I.5 PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF PLAN

The highest priority of this Plan, as established by the Charles County Department of Planning and Growth Management, Charles County Department of Public Works (Environmental Resources Division) and the Charles County Commissioners, is to ensure the conservation of resources and protection of the environment by maximizing waste reduction and recycling, thus minimizing the requirement for disposal facilities.

An equally important priority is the establishment of tighter county and local control over the permitting and operation of required solid waste management facilities. This monitoring program will encourage adherence to permit requirements and serve to inform the county staff and residents of the activities at these facilities.

Charles County will use this document as a planning tool for solid waste management during the next decade. The Plan provides the framework that will be relied upon to make numerous decisions on the implementation of required capital construction and management programs for

the next 10 years. It is the intent of this Plan to develop and articulate issues that must be addressed in order to focus the community on the goals and objectives and concepts of solid waste management through open and active public participation. When consensus is reached through this process; additional planning, engineering, and community involvement will define the specific settings, technologies, regulations, and policies needed to achieve these goals and objectives. This Plan will be continuously updated to reflect these specific decisions as they are approved.

I.6 PLAN ORGANIZATION

The *Charles County Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan* addresses the management of solid waste including generation, waste reduction, collection, transportation, processing, and disposal. Ultimately, this document will provide Charles County with a plan of action during the 10-year planning period. Topics to be included for discussion in the solid waste management plan are outlined in *COMAR 26.03.03.03*. A listing of these topics and a cross reference for locating topic discussions is provided prior to this introduction. This Plan contains an introduction, five chapters, a glossary of terms, and a list of references. A brief summary of the five chapters follows.

I.6.1 Chapter 1 -- Goals and Regulatory Framework

The goals and objectives guiding solid waste management in Charles County are presented in this chapter. The intent of these goals and objectives is carried through to the evaluation of alternatives and the formulation of recommended actions in Chapters 4 and 5. The procedure to amend this Plan is also presented in this chapter.

The planning and decision-making process governing solid waste management facilities and issues in Charles County is guided by regulatory requirements and input from the public. This chapter describes the structure of Charles County Government as it relates to solid waste management, and the impact of existing federal, state, and county regulations on the planning, establishment, and operation of solid waste disposal systems in the County. Additionally, a general description of public involvement in the planning and decision-making process for solid waste management facilities is presented.

I.6.2 Chapter 2 -- County Background Information

General historical and geological information for Charles County is presented. A description of the regional setting and history provides the background for discussing the effect of growth on the provision of solid waste management services and facilities.

Population projections for the County are presented in this chapter. These projections are the basis for the prediction of solid waste generation and the sizing of solid waste management

facilities. Also, there is a summary of the current requirements and policies in the County's comprehensive plan and zoning requirements relating to solid waste management.

I.6.3 Chapter 3 -- Existing Solid Waste Management

The purpose of this chapter is to compile a data base on current solid waste management in Charles County and to serve as a baseline for the development of recommendations in the following chapters. An analysis of the Charles County waste stream is provided, including historic data, projections of waste generation, waste stream composition, imported wastes, and exported wastes. A description of the existing collection systems for solid waste and recyclables, the current recycling program, and existing and proposed solid waste management facilities is also provided.

I.6.4 Chapter 4 -- Assessment of Solid Waste Management Alternatives

Using the data presented in the first three chapters, an assessment of the adequacy of existing and planned management facilities regulations and policies to meet the goals and objectives for the planning period is presented. Alternatives available to meet identified deficiencies are evaluated. In addition, a review of siting constraints for solid waste facilities within the County is presented.

I.6.5 Chapter 5 -- Solid Waste Management Plan of Action for – 2011-2021

Based on the assessment of needs and alternatives presented in Chapter 4, a solid waste management action plan for Charles County is presented. The recommended plan includes the sizing and staging of needed management facilities, organization of the collection system for waste and recyclables, and required modifications to county policies and regulations during the 10-year planning period. Cost projections and methods to finance the recommended plan are also presented.