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CONTACT
Kerrin O'Brien, Executive Director
(517) 974-3672

Recommendations show the way to more recycling

LANSING, MI – The Michigan Recycling Coalition (MRC) applauds the simultaneous release of two separate reports and sets of recommendations that would shift the focus of Michigan's waste management strategy to increase recycling. Issued on Monday, the long-awaited reports show how Michigan can support and benefit from doubling the state's recycling rate.

The Solid Waste and Sustainability Advisory Panel report calls for revamping Part 115 of PA 451 of 1994, the law governing solid waste and recycling activities in Michigan, to better align with the Michigan Solid Waste Policy. The Governor's Recycling Council report outlines how to achieve the governor's goal of doubling Michigan's current recycling rate from 15 to 30 percent.

According to Executive Director Kerrin O'Brien, the reports underscore what the MRC has been advocating over the last 10 years -- that a comprehensive materials management policy framework and targeted investments can turn previously wasted resources into opportunities for Michigan businesses.

According to the MRC's 2011 State of Recycling in Michigan report, by reaching a 50 percent recycling rate Michigan could create up to 13,000 new jobs, \$300 million in worker income, \$3.9 billion in economic activity, and \$22 million in additional state tax revenue. "With the right policies, incentives, and infrastructure in place, going beyond 30 percent is entirely possible and being done else in the country," said O'Brien.

According to the Governor's Recycling Council report, \$1.3 billion is spent annually to manage waste in Michigan. By updating policies, programs, and incentivizing sustainable materials management, that spend can be partially reallocated to capture those materials for management as resources and sale on the commodities market.

"These reports help point Michigan in the right direction toward more sustainable management of our resources and put millions of dollars' worth of otherwise wasted resources to work rebuilding our economy," O'Brien said. "We look forward to working with the governor and lawmakers to implement the recommendations of the two reports."

The Michigan Recycling Coalition represents recycling and composting interests statewide. For more information, visit michiganrecycles.org.

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