

# DUTCHESS COUNTY'S "RETHINKING WASTE" SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN ADOPTED

**Poughkeepsie, NY**... Dutchess County Executive Marcus J. Molinaro has signed the County Legislature's resolution to adopt Dutchess County's local solid waste management plan, *Rethinking Waste*. The County Legislature voted to adopt the plan last week at their April board meeting. Rethinking Waste is a ten-year plan focused on significantly increasing the amount of material recycled in Dutchess County in order to decrease the total amount of waste. The plan calls to almost triple the current recycling rate, increasing total recycling to nearly 60% by 2022.

County Executive Molinaro said, "For the first time, Dutchess County has established a clear policy for solid waste management. The *Rethinking Waste* plan moves us toward an aggressive, yet achievable goal to increase our recycling rate to nearly 60% by 2022, and provides us a working blueprint for the next ten years. There are clear ecological and economic benefits for all of our residents to increase recycling and we are focused on realizing those benefits."

Recycling has been the law in Dutchess County since 1990 for both residents and businesses, yet the overall recycling volume has been stagnant, with only an estimated 23% of materials recycled. Rethinking Waste provides more than 100 specific tasks and objectives to increase the recycling rate including recycling education and promotion through public presentations, website information, events and more. The plan will be implemented by the Division of Solid Waste Management, which was established last year by County Executive Molinaro under the direction of Deputy Commissioner Lindsay Carille.

Ms. Carille noted, "Recycling is easier than ever before and the number of recyclable materials has greatly increased, so with increased awareness, we are hopeful that all of our residents will make recycling a habit."

Dutchess County Legislator Benjamin Traudt, Chairman of the Environment Committee, looks forward to meeting and surpassing the recycling goals of the Rethinking Waste plan. "Going from a 23% recycling rate to 60% in ten years is a lofty goal, but we can definitely achieve it. With much of the County recycling through the ease of single stream, and the programs available to keep hazardous materials out of the waste stream, I believe we will end up doing better than 60% by 2022," said Legislator Traudt.

Currently, more than over 190,000 tons of materials are disposed of each year in Dutchess County. Although the Rethinking Waste plan seeks to achieve a significant increase in recycling, there will still be solid waste that must be addressed with a sound management plan. The plan relies on the continued use of the Dutchess County Resource Recovery Agency's Waste to Energy facility for the environmentally sound disposal of solid waste. The Waste to Energy facility began operating in the late 1980s to prevent the continued use of local landfills as well as the creation of new ones. The Waste to Energy facility converts waste to useable electricity in a safe and responsible manner that is closely monitored and regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency and as a result, there are no active landfills currently in Dutchess County.

Dutchess County Government has worked directly with the DCRRA to get the Waste to Energy facility operating more efficiently. In 2012, the County budget included \$4 million for the Net Service Fee (the RRA's operating deficit between expenses and revenues.) For the 2013 county budget, that cost is down to \$2 million budgeted for the Net Service Fee. The goal is to see the Net Service Fee completely eliminated in the next two years as a new management agreement for the facility's operations is put in place. The terms and conditions of the management agreement that DCRRA currently has with the plant operator was originally written and signed in the 1980s and was very one-sided - benefiting the plant operator with a significant share of all revenues while most expenses are the responsibility of the RRA. The new management agreement seeks to modify the current client/vendor relationship to create a mutually beneficial partnership.

“As we increase the amount of materials that are recycled in our county and get our residents more active in composting yard and food waste and finding new ways to reuse materials, we will decrease the volume going to the waste-to-energy facility and lessen our reliance on it. This will open new opportunities for other uses for the facility such as making it available to other local counties who rely on landfills to dispose of waste,” said Deputy Commissioner of Solid Waste Management Lindsay Carille.

The Rethinking Waste plan will now be sent to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation for final approval. Dutchess County Legislature Chairman Robert Rolison said, “I commend everyone involved in this process for their valuable input, including NYS DEC who provided expert advice and recommendations while crafting this plan.”

To learn more about the Rethinking Waste plan and recycling efforts in Dutchess County, go to <http://www.co.dutchess.ny.us/CountyGov/Departments/SolidWasteMgmt/22223.htm>. The specific tasks and objectives of the plan can be found on pages 102 to 104.

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