

# WESTCHESTER COUNTY BOARD OF LEGISLATORS

## COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT & ENERGY

**MINUTES: February 4, 2008**

MEMBERS (E&E): Chair: Abinanti; Legislators: Harckham, Kaplowitz, Myers, Nonna, Oros, Rogowsky

IN ATTENDANCE: STAFF: C. Crane; GUESTS: S. Gerry, A. Neuman (CEO); L. Trentacoste, A. Huang (Law); E. Pepper (CCE), R. Zipf (Ref. Dist. Adv. Bd.); [list of other attendees on file]

Meeting called to order at 3:45 pm.

Item(s) Discussed: E&E Item No. 1, 4 – **Proposed Amendments to Source Separation Law and Proposed Legislation on Recycling of Plastic Bags**

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Committee Chair Abinanti opened committee discussion of the county's recent recycling enforcement initiative and consideration of proposed changes. Committee members heard from representatives of the county administration, about a dozen trash haulers, and various environmentalists. The county's present recycling laws date to 1992, right after the county adopted a solid waste management plan. Susan Gerry, County Executive's Office, described the proposed changes to the county's Source Separation Law to committee members.

The proposed amendments would require recycling of 'grey' cardboard (for example, cereal boxes, etc.). The amendments would also extend mandatory recycling to additional businesses, schools and other large waste generators. For the first time, the proposal would establish penalties for theft of recyclables, targeting the systematic theft which is an emerging problem.

The county administration has stepped up enforcement of recycling on homeowners, businesses, and trash haulers as of February 1st.

Most at the meeting agreed with the purposes of the proposed amendments and goals of enhanced enforcement. However, many raised questions during the meeting about the fairness of the crackdown on recycling violations. Representatives of the solid waste industry argued that the enforcement would be better directed to non-complying residents and businesses rather than to trash collectors and haulers.

The Committee also considered a proposal designed to promote recycling of plastic bags, which was described by Andrew Neuman, County Executive's Office. Ubiquitous plastic bags from dry cleaners, supermarkets, and clothing stores are highly recyclable but rarely recycled. The proposed amendment would require large retailers (greater than 10,000 sq. ft.) to accept plastic bags for recycling.

The Committee plans to continue consideration of both proposals in a couple of weeks.

Chair Abinanti adjourned the meeting at 4:55 pm.

[audio recording of meeting is on file]