

**Recycling Fund Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes of September 25, 2025**

The following members were present:

Michele Nestor, Chair
Gordon S. Burgoyne, Vice Chair
Bob Anderson
Douglas Chew
Adam Finley
Brian Guzzone
Jason Leck
Joseph Reinhart
Shannon Reiter
Kyle Rosato
Joanne Shafer
Robert Watts
Gerald Zona

The following members were absent:

Robert Barkanic
Senator Carloyn Comitta
John Frederick
Gregg Pearson
Craig Potter
Representative Jack Rader
Edward Vogel
Senator Gene Yaw

The following alternates were present:

Ian Irvin (on behalf of Robert Barkanic)
Jacob Misal (on behalf of Representative Jack Rader)
Matt Osenbach (on behalf of Senator Gene Yaw)

The following guests and Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) staff members were present:

Kevin Beer	DEP Bureau of Waste Management (BWM)
Jackie Binder	DEP BWM/Recording Secretary
Jodi Brennan	Clearfield County Planning and Solid Waste Authority
Bob Bylone	Pennsylvania Recycling Markets Center (PennRMC)
Laura Campbell	DEP Policy Office
Chad Clancy	DEP BWM
Donna Cooper	Children First

Mimi Cooper	Centre County Recycling and Refuse Authority (CCRRA)
Evelyn Dyer	DEP BWM
Nate Eachus	Pennsylvania Master Watershed Stewards/Pure Green BioAg
Chancie Fielder	DEP BWM
Nikolina Gaudin	DEP Bureau of Regulatory Counsel (BRC)
Megan Gahring	Lawrence-Mercer County Recycling and Solid Waste
Veronica Harris	Montgomery County Solid Waste Authority/PROP
Laura Henry	DEP BWM/Liaison to the Committee
Lauren Imgrund	DEP Policy Office
Jeffrey Ivicic	Legislative Director, Office of Senator Patrick Stefano
Trent Machamer	PA Senate Policy Office
Tom Mellott	DEP BWM
Jennie Shade	Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)
Jessica Shilladay	DEP BWM
Chris Solloway	DEP BWM
Jennifer Summers	Professional Recyclers of Pennsylvania (PROP)
Mark Vottero	DEP BWM
Mindy Waltemyer	York County Solid Waste Authority YCSWA)

Call to Order; Introduction of Members and Guests; Approval of Minutes of March 27, 2025, Meeting; Old Business

Chair Nestor called the meeting to order at 10:52 a.m. Committee Liaison Laura Henry conducted roll call. Chair Nestor called for a motion to approve the minutes of the March 27, 2025, RFAC meeting. A motion was made by Jason Leck, seconded by Joanne Shafer. All approved, none opposed, and the motion carried. Chair Nestor asked for old business and Ms. Henry gave an update on the 904 Grant Subcommittee. The intent and purpose of the committee was established, but a fully appointed committee was not yet formed.

Public Comments

Ms. Henry reviewed the procedures put in place by the DEP Policy Office to provide public comments at meetings. No public comments were presented or made for discussion.

Discussion Item: Review of Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Recycling Fund Expenditures

Mark Vottero, DEP Bureau of Waste Management, Division of Waste Minimization and Planning, began his review of fiscal year (FY) 2024-2025 Recycling Fund expenditures with the Act 101, Section 901 Municipal Waste Planning Grant. Ten (10) Planning Grants were awarded in 2024, an increase of 1 from 2023; and 13 Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Education Grants were awarded in 2024, an increase of 3 from 2023. The first Household Lithium-Ion Battery Management Education Grant was also awarded in 2024. In total DEP awarded 24 Section 901 Grants in FY 24-25, compared to 19 the previous year, representing an increase of approximately \$180,000 from the previous year.

Mr. Vottero then reviewed Act 101, Section 902 Recycling Development and Implementation Grant awards. \$18.9 million was awarded to 126 communities in November 2024 for Round 62; this was a decrease from \$19.3 million in Round 61. Since June of 2025, 125 grants had been executed. Mr. Vottero indicated Round 63 would open in late 2025 or early 2026.

Mr. Vottero indicated DEP received 58 Act 101, Section 903 County Recycling Coordinator Grants for calendar year 2024; this represented an increase of 1 award from calendar year 2023. Awards reached \$2 million for calendar year 2023 and were expected to reach \$2 million again for calendar year 2024. Of the 58 applications received for calendar year 2024, 55 had been processed and 3 required additional information to be submitted prior to further processing. DEP projected a \$40,000 increase in the Section 903 grant awards over the previous year. Applications for calendar year 2025 were anticipated to open in early 2026.

Mr. Vottero reviewed the Act 101, Section 904 Performance Grant. The 2022 report for this grant was available for review on the DEP website. This program received 602 applications for FY 2023; 220 applications had been processed to date, totaling approximately \$5.4 million in awards. An additional 36 grant applications were in the final stages of review and were anticipated to be submitted in the coming weeks for payment; 51 applications were still being reviewed. The 2024 grant application period was opened September 25, 2025; 177 applications were received to date. The filing deadline was December 31, 2025.

Mr. Vottero concluded that the HHW Reimbursement Grant was on par with previous years at \$1.34 million. This grant is for sponsored registered events and provides up to 50% funding of the cost.

Mr. Vottero called on Ms. Henry to speak about the Act 101, Section 1102 Host Municipality Inspector (HMI) Reimbursement Grants. Ms. Henry stated there was a delay in processing the calendar year 2023 HMI reimbursements due to staffing issues. An annuitant was brought in specifically to process these HMI reimbursements, and all 2023 grants had been processed and paid out. The 2024 calendar year reimbursement grant solicitation opened on Saturday, September 20, 2025. Municipalities were informed of the grant opening and were made aware that the application period was shortened by 30 days to allow for processing before the end of the annuitant's contract. The application deadline was 11:59 p.m. on November 20, 2025.

Mr. Vottero then called on Jessica Shilladay, DEP Bureau of Waste Management, Organic Recycling Coordinator, to discuss the Food Recovery Infrastructure Grant (FRIG). Round 3 awards were still awaiting final approval and announcement. The program recommended more than 100 projects for funding with almost all of them serving Environmental Justice areas. Ms. Shilladay indicated DEP is in the process of conducting a survey of the FRIG Round 2 grantees to gauge the impact of FRIG monies on organizations' ability to recover fresh, wholesome food and feed Pennsylvanians. Once the surveys have been completed and results analyzed, DEP will be able to understand and share the impacts FRIG had on the non-profit organizations that received grants in Round 2.

Chair Nestor commended Ms. Shilladay on leading up the FRIG program and stated that due to the rising cost of food and other unknowns in the economy it is anticipated that there may be a

growing need for this program. She is hopeful that the Department will continue to find funding for the FRIG program within its budget.

Action Item: FY 2026-2027 Recycling Fund Spending Plan

Mr. Vottero reviewed the 2026-2027 Recycling, Public Education and Technical Assistance Expenditures.

The first item discussed was the Recycling Hotline, which enables responses to inquiries from the public. DEP proposed to continue to budget \$90,000 for implementation and maintenance.

Next, Mr. Vottero mentioned the Commonwealth Recycling Implementation program, which supplies recycling containers and kiosks around the Capitol Complex, alkaline battery collection bins, educational materials, and paper shredding units for Treasury. DEP again proposed to budget \$50,000 for this program.

The Recycling Markets Center (RMC) was discussed next. RMC celebrated its 20-year anniversary in October 2025. DEP and RMC recently finalized a new 5-year, \$900,000 contract. Mr. Vottero discussed specific projects of the RMC, the first being the Recycling Economic Impact (REI) Study, which will quantify updated information on the environmental and financial values of recycling to support sustainable and economic development. The REI Study was conducted previously both in 2003 and 2017, and the current Study was expected to be completed in October 2025. The second project discussed was the Propane Extraction project, a pilot program for extraction of propane from one pound propane cylinders, allowing for the empty containers to be pierced and crushed for scrap metal recycling. This project was being conducted at the Centre County Recycling & Refuse Authority (CCRRA). Bob Bylone presented this Pilot Program at the Keystone Solid Waste Association of North America (SWANA)/Pennsylvania Waste Industries Association (PWIA) Joint Fall Conference.

Ms. Shilladay discussed the federal Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling (SWIFR) Grant; DEP applied for and received \$511,502 in SWIFR funding from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). DEP will continue to work with the RMC through a SWIFR subaward. Food waste was identified as the most prevalent waste stream in Pennsylvania in the 2022 Waste Characterization Study; based on these findings, DEP decided to use part of the SWIFR Grant to enhance ways that wasted food can be diverted to feed people, animals, or soil. DEP and RMC will continue to use the grant to enhance the circular economy of wasted food and wasted food reduction measures by bridging the gap between entities that have excess food and entities who could use the food. Over 4,300 food donation sites have been identified across the Commonwealth. A GIS map will be created including the state's 9 major food banks, other food recovery and/or donation organizations, and permitted food waste composting locations. A best management practices document will also be created that includes recommended practices for handling donated food and discards. The funding has the potential to make a positive impact in PA and contribute to national goals.

Mr. Vottero discussed the Professional Recyclers of Pennsylvania (PROP), which was proposed to be funded at \$260,000. DEP partners with PROP to provide municipal, county, and private

recycling leaders with continuing education, resources and services to accomplish the goals of Act 101. DEP planned to work with PROP to increase the education in schools and universities as well. As part of this partnership, PROP agreed to make the materials and templates developed by the Lancaster County Solid Waste Management Authority through the Act 101, Section 901 pilot project for Household Lithium-Ion Battery Education available on their website.

Mr. Vottero indicated \$250,000 was being budgeted for the Recycling Technical Assistance Program. This program provides up to \$7,500 in free technical support for local governments seeking to update their recycling and waste minimization programs. DEP had 14 completed projects with reports posted on the DEP website, 4 projects in process with reports under review, and 2 recently approved applications for projects. The Recycling Technical Assistance Program could accept more applications; Mr. Vottero encouraged local governments to consider applying.

Ms. Shilladay relayed information about the execution of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between DEP and the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA) for the proper management of agricultural plastic. DEP budgeted \$250,000 for this MOU, which was renewed through June 2030. This MOU promotes and encourages the development of programs to reduce, collect, transport, process, and reuse agricultural plastics and discourages the burning of said plastics. PDA was soliciting interest for the next contractor to work on this project. The previous contractor, Ag Plastics Solutions, coordinated placement of agricultural plastic collection containers on farms mainly in DEP's Southcentral Region. As of June 2025, a total of 274,399 lbs. of ag plastics were collected, 161,398 lbs. were sold, and 112,821 lbs. remained in inventory; a total of \$7,903.47 was received from the sale of the materials. DEP planned to work with the RMC on additional market outlets and to make more educational materials available under the current MOU.

Mr. Vottero indicated \$600,000 was budgeted for DEP's MOU with the Department of General Services (DGS). Under the MOU, DEP, DGS and the Green Gov Counsel are developing a waste resource management audit standard that will be used to reduce waste and improve recycling sustainability outcomes at Commonwealth facilities.

Last, Mr. Vottero indicated \$450,000 was budgeted for DEP's MOU with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT). DEP and PennDOT continued to expand the use of plastics in roadways under this MOU.

Chair Nestor stated in the past several years the Department repeatedly says it is underusing the Technical Assistance Grant Program, when there used to be more projects desiring to use these funds than there were funds available. She inquired whether it was time to update how the program is implemented to allow local governments to tackle smaller projects/problems with the available funding? Mr. Vottero answered that there has been a recent uptick in applications, most likely due to DEP concentrating on better advertising of the program. He indicated DEP could consider increasing the maximum award but would have to investigate further.

Chair Nestor called for a motion to approve the proposed expenditures of the Recycling Fund Financial Statement for 2026-2027. No further comments were made or discussion held.

Shannon Reiter motioned to approve, seconded by Gordon Burgoyne. All approved, none opposed, and there were no abstentions; the motion carried.

New Business

Jason Leck questioned how many municipalities DEP requested to verify their reports for calendar year 2023. Mr. Vottero indicated verification was requested for 51 applications. There were multiple reasons for requesting these verifications.

Adjourn

Chair Nestor called for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by Jason Leck, seconded by Doug Chew. All approved, none opposed; the motion carried, and the meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.