

Frequently Asked Questions About Oswego County Recycling and Solid Waste Law

Q: Will this law and “flow control” increase my solid waste fees?

A: There is no basis to the claim that this local law will increase rates. In fact, the County is making a commitment to hold rates steady for 2009. When all the waste generated in Oswego County is brought to the County solid waste facilities it will stabilize rates for the long-term. Other counties like Oneida, Herkimer, Madison and Onondaga have actually lowered their rates under flow control.

Q: What is “flow control” and why should we have it?

A: “Flow control” requires all solid waste generated in Oswego County to be disposed of at county solid waste facilities, and not taken to facilities in other counties. The County has a goal, set by the Legislature, to make the solid waste system self-supporting. In order to accomplish this, the waste generated in the County should stay in the system so that the tip fees contribute to the cost of the system. Oswego County has made an investment of \$60 million over the past 25 years in a solid waste system to meet residents’ needs. When haulers skim tipping fees away from the system by getting a cheaper rate at a private landfill, other users and taxpayers must make up the difference. Flow control will protect taxpayers’ investment in the solid waste system and make sure it is paid for by solid waste fees, not taxes.

Q: Why is it better to have fees pay for the solid waste system, instead of taxes?

A: When all solid waste generated here is brought to County facilities, then all users pay based on the amount they dispose of. Large waste generators would pay more than small waste generators. If, however, we relied only on taxes to pay for the system, some of you would end up paying less than your share, and others would end up paying more.

Q: Will solid waste services improve under this new law?

A: Yes. Since the County closed its Materials Recovery Facility (MRF), recycling efforts in the County have dropped. Currently the County’s solid waste system collects less than half of what was collected in 2002 (the last year the MRF was running). The new Law requires haulers to bring residential recyclables to County facilities. This will give the County a much better handle on recycling numbers to better enforce the law, and improve recycling efforts without impacting County taxes. We’ll be able to begin using the MRF again. Flow control will give the County the ability to fund things like household hazardous waste collection and metals and electronic recovery ... *without impacting taxes*.

Q: What do tipping fees pay for?

A: Tipping fees cover more than just a fee to dispose of garbage (such as in a private landfill). At our transfer stations we collect, *free of charge*, waste oil; electronics; televisions; textiles and recyclables. Starting next year, household hazardous waste will be added. The cost of handling these items is borne by the tipping fees, not just sticker holders. All Oswego County residents can use these services regardless of whether they use a hauler or bring their waste to a transfer station themselves.

Q: Does the new law ban burning?

A: No.

Q. How does this impact our environment?

A. Oswego County has a longstanding commitment to recycling and reducing waste. The proposed changes will help increase the amount of items that are recycled by requiring all haulers to bring recyclable household materials to county solid waste facilities. This will reduce the amount of waste going to the landfill or energy recovery facility, and conserve natural resources in the long run.

The photo below shows a load recently dumped by a local hauler at the County's Energy Recovery Facility. Recyclable materials are mixed with garbage. No attempt had been made to separate the recyclables from the garbage. This is not only bad for the environment, it makes the solid waste system more expensive for you, the taxpayer and ratepayer. The new law will help prevent this problem and help keep costs down.

