

## Municipalities

## Summary

**Why is the law needed?**

Waste diversion rates have plateaued in Vermont between 30 to 36% over the past 10 years. A major portion of the waste stream that is disposed is composed of recyclable items, leaf and yard debris, and food scraps that could be kept out of landfills and put to better use. Landfilling these materials (especially food scraps) contributes to climate change by producing greenhouse gas emissions, and takes up limited landfill space.

**What is the goal of Universal Recycling (Act 148)?**

The goal is to keep these valuable materials from being landfilled and increase convenience for their collection. By establishing phased-in bans on these materials (recyclables, food scraps, leaf and yard debris) and by requiring parallel collection (collection of these materials at the same location where trash is collected), more of these materials can be kept out of the landfill. The bans adopted in Act 148 send a signal to markets and end-users that materials will be available for processing. Having a dedicated source of valuable material creates an incentive to invest in the infrastructure needed to meet a growing demand for their reprocessing. Universal Recycling will also develop convenient and consistent recycling and composting services for Vermont residents and businesses statewide.

**What will Municipalities need to do?**

- Implement a variable rate pricing system (a.k.a. unit-based pricing) that charges for the collection of MSW from residential customers by **volume** or **weight** by July 1, 2015. See “Variable Rate Pricing Guide” and a sample ordinance online for more information.
- Provide containers for listed recyclables alongside all trash containers in public spaces (except restrooms) by July 1, 2015
- Comply with listed recyclables landfill ban by July 1, 2015
- Comply with leaf, yard and clean wood debris landfill ban by July 1, 2016
- Comply with food scraps landfill ban by July 1, 2020
- Comply with the parallel collection requirements for any municipally operated solid waste hauling and facilities (transfer stations, landfills, etc.). See “Parallel Collection Fact Sheet” online for more information (link is on next page).

**What is Variable Rate (or Unit-Based) Pricing?**

Many communities in Vermont, the United States, and in other countries pay for their trash the same way that they pay for their electricity—based on the amount they use—or in this case, the amount of trash they produce. This payment system is commonly referred to as unit-based pricing (UBP), where a resident pays a certain fee for each bag/container (e.g. volume unit) or for each pound (e.g. weight unit) of trash they throw away. Unit-based pricing systems provide an incentive to generate less, which can save municipalities money on disposal costs.



**Who are the other affected stakeholders and what will they need to do?**

**Facilities and Bag-drop haulers** that collect trash must also collect:

- by July 1, 2014 - Listed recyclables<sup>1</sup>
- by July 1, 2015 - Leaf and yard debris at least seasonally April 1 – Dec. 15
- by July 1, 2017 - Food scraps

**Trash haulers** that offer curbside service must also provide services for:

- by July 1, 2015 - Listed recyclables
- by July 1, 2020 - Food scraps

**Residents** will need to recycle, compost and divert the following materials from the landfill by dates listed:

- by July 1, 2015 - Listed recyclables<sup>1</sup>
- by July 1, 2016 - Leaf and yard debris and clean wood waste
- by July 1, 2020 - Food scraps

**Businesses, institutions, schools, and other large food scrap generators** will need to divert the following materials from the landfill by the dates listed:

**Listed Recyclables:**

- All listed recyclables by July 1, 2015

**Leaf & Yard Debris:**

- Leaf and yard debris and clean wood waste by July 1, 2016

**Food Scraps:**

- Depending on the amount of food scraps generated and distance to a composting facility, deadlines range from July 1, 2014 (for those producing 2 tons or more per week) to July 1, 2020 (for all). Please see [Universal Recycling Timeline](#) for details.



**See ANR’s Parallel Collection Fact Sheet for detail on what services haulers and facilities are required to offer.**

[\*\*PARALLEL COLLECTION FACT SHEET\*\*](#)

**HAVE QUESTIONS?** Call 802-828-1138 or visit our website at [VTrecycles.com](http://VTrecycles.com)



<sup>1</sup> Listed recyclables under Act 148 include: aluminum and steel cans, aluminum foil and pie pans, glass bottles and jars from food and beverages, #1 and #2 (PET and HDPE) plastic, corrugated cardboard, white and mixed paper, newspaper, magazines, catalogues, paper mail, envelopes, and box board.

NOTE: Other materials are already banned (see [Materials Banned from Disposal](#) at VTrecycles.com) from landfill disposal in Vermont; this factsheet does not include a comprehensive list of the statewide landfill ban. Additionally, many solid waste districts already require recycling of these and other materials. Contact your local solid waste entity or town manager for more information.