

Advancing Sustainable Materials Management: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Report (July 2018)



Walter Wright, Jr.
wwright@mwlaw.com
(501) 688.8839

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The United States Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA") has issued a report titled:

Advancing Sustainable Materials Management: 2015 Fact Sheet ("Report")

The *Report* assesses trends in material generation, recycling, composting, combustion with energy recovery, and landfilling in the United States.

The *Report* is stated to be a continuation of EPA's collection and reporting of data on the generation and disposition of solid waste in the United States that it has undertaken for more than 30 years. The agency states it uses such data to measure the success of materials management programs in the United States and to characterize the national waste stream. The *Report* reflects facts and figures based on the most recent information (i.e., from calendar year 2015).

By way of summary, the *Report* states that approximately 262 million tons of municipal cycle waste were generated in 2015. The *Report* further states of the municipal solid waste generated, approximately 68 million tons were recycled and 23 million tons were composted. The 91 million tons were stated to be equivalent to a 34.7 percent recycling and composting rate. More than 33 million tons were combusted with energy recovery. 137 million tons were landfilled.

EPA states that information about waste generation disposal is an important foundation for managing materials. It further notes:

Sustainably managing materials requires thinking beyond waste and instead focusing on the life cycle of a product, from the time it is produced, used, reused, and ultimately recycled or discarded. This is known as Sustainable Materials Management (SMM). SMM refers to the use and reuse of materials in the most productive and sustainable way across their entire life cycle. SMM conserves resources, reduces waste, and minimizes adverse environmental impacts from materials.

The *Report* is stated to analyze municipal solid waste trends in generation and management, materials and products, and economic indicators affecting municipal solid waste. A section is included on the generation of construction and demolition debris. While not a part of municipal solid waste, it is stated to comprise a significant portion of the non-hazardous solid waste stream.

A [copy of the Report](#) can be downloaded here.