

District Recycling Coordinator Monthly Board Report

September 2026

Executive Summary

In September 2026, the preliminary single-stream recycling tip fee at Republic Services was negative \$79.06 per ton, \$2.97 more favorable than August's finalized rate of negative \$82.03. Fiber and metals remained firm while plastics stayed weak. Shared-service drafts remain with Boonton and Washington Township; Harding (depot collection) and Mendham Township (quarterly brush-container amendment) were added. Staff led the five-county MRC meeting on September 23 (more than 100 attendees) and the Clean Communities coordinator meeting on September 16 (46 attendees). The 2024 municipal tonnage-grant review found NJDEP under-reported about 1,394 tons in category 24 and over-reported 10,870.73 tons of disposal; a countywide correction was filed, with municipal responses due October 12. Marrone has been recommended for appointment to the NJDEP Plastics Advisory Council. 2027 curbside contract billings are forecast at \$2,589,107.61, plus \$170,544.24 for schools and \$106,168.06 for complexes.

Recycling Market and Operations Report Update

In September, the preliminary single-stream recycling rate with Republic Services was negative \$79.06 per ton, a \$2.97 increase in value from the previous month's finalized rate of negative \$82.03 per ton.

In September and early October, the Northeast recycling market shows a stark split between strengthening paper and metals markets and heavily depressed, stagnant plastic segments. Data forecasts show that different material types face very diverse demand pressures right now.

Fiber makes up nearly 50% of outbound tonnage at our Northeast Materials Recovery Facilities (MRFs), and its strong performance in the fall is vital to the region's recycling program finances, especially as paper and cardboard markets rebound. The paper sector has shown the strongest growth heading into October, despite previous mill closures and low-demand periods last year, indicating steady domestic mill interest. Regional mills are increasing mixed paper content in their packaging to reduce raw material costs, supporting municipal curbside programs. As for cardboard, the month-to-month price rise to \$95/ton as present, is mainly due to a significant domestic manufacturing investment boom, driven by large North American mill projects and expansions aimed at recycling fiber. This extra capacity creates a durable demand hub in the Northeast, protected from international market fluctuations, with current rates well above last year's \$62.50/ton level.

The post-consumer plastics industry faces oversupply and brand hesitation, especially in the Northeast, where high virgin plastics production clashes with stalled sustainability goals. In September, the NJDEP extended the food containers and packaging exemption under the state's Recycled Content Law from January 2027 to December 2029 because food-safe PCR technologies have limited scalability. This has led to canceled recycled-resin contracts and reduced purchasing intentions as reported by several groups in our area. Moreover, despite policy pressures, PET prices have flatlined, even as brands pledge more recycled content; low virgin PET prices lead brands to buy cheap, new plastics instead of recycled PET flakes. Additionally, Northeast MRFs are also absorbing high sorting costs without financial return. Natural HDPE can be dyed any color and is highly versatile, while colored HDPE's value is limited by pigment restrictions, keeping its worth low.

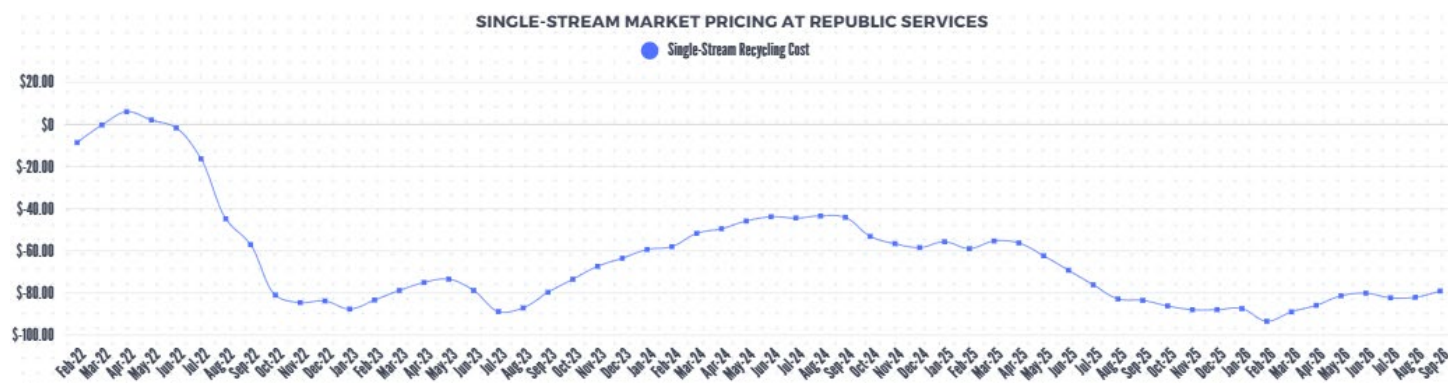
Scrap metals like steel and aluminum remain stable, driven by regional industrial demand and low inventories. Used beverage containers continue to command high prices, around 100 cents per pound, since May. Domestic aluminum mills have maintained aggressive buying to meet local manufacturing demands, making aluminum the most profitable curbside recycling item per pound. Steel cans also stay strong, averaging \$207.50

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per ton during this time. The regional scrap metal market is gaining momentum in fall, with experts predicting localized price increases due to structural supply shortages. Northeast steel mills are actively competing for limited scrap to support regional infrastructure, allowing MRFs to maximize profits through magnetic separation lines.

The market outlook for the remainder of 2026 across the Northeast recycling sector is a highly divided, “two-speed” market forecast. As we enter the final quarter (Q4) of the year, macroeconomic conditions are heavily favoring fiber, driven by mill demand and holiday packaging surges, and metals amid tight inventories and higher-than-average demand, while post-consumer plastics are expected to finish the year deeply depressed.



Monthly MCMUA single-stream recycling tip fees at Republic Services.

Ongoing Shared Service Agreements and Contract Activities

In September and October, Marrone and Chavanne continued follow-up conversations regarding the adoption of shared service agreements for the following towns and their respective contracts for their consideration:

- *Town of Boonton – Curbside and Depot Collection SSA Renewal.*
- *Township of Washington First Amendment to Depot Collection SSA – Scrap Metal Container Addition.*
- *Township of Harding – Depot Collection SSA.*
- *Township of Mendham – First Amendment to SSA – Brush Container Temporary Collection Event Addition on a Quarterly Basis.*
 - This amendment would include adding container services to their DPW yard for residential and municipal brush via temporary drop-off events, and the MCMUA transporting the material to one of our two vegetative waste recycling facilities.

Recycling/Clean Communities Education, Inspections, and Customer Service Support

Below are summaries of Recycling and Clean Communities’ projects, public outreach, and education programs in September 2026. Details regarding these activities are provided in a supplemental report.

Recycling and Clean Communities Projects, Public Outreach, Education, and Inspections:

- MCMUA, County Recycling Coordinator, and ANJR Joint Efforts
- MCMUA Assists in Shaping New Jersey’s County Food Waste Reduction Guidance Document
- MCMUA, NJDEP, and NJDA Work to Create Food Waste Recycling Regulatory Education
- MCMUA Plans for its Fifth MRC Meeting of the 2026 Calendar Year

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- MCMUA Sponsored Internship with Morris County's Higher Learning Institutions
- MCMUA Attends the Denville Farmer's Market and Educational Green Fair Event
- MCMUA Provides Recycling Education at the Parsippany Whole Foods Event
- MCMUA Attends and Networks at the 5th Annual Morris County Community Exchange Event
- MCMUA Participates in the Sustainability Fair of the Chatham
- Solid Waste Planning Division Assignment Update
- MCMUA Recycling Public Outreach Educational Materials and Efforts
- MCMUA Attends the Rutgers Certified Recycling Professionals Course
- MCMUA Attends the Rutgers Certified Clean Communities Coordinator Course

Solid Waste Planning Activities and Special Projects

MCMUA Presents at the NJ Association of County and City Health Officials on Food Waste:

On September 17, Marrone presented at the New Jersey Association of County and City Health Officials (NJACCHO) Large Forum, which gathered representatives from state, county, and large regional health departments. During the meeting, Marrone invited the nonprofit Share My Meals to introduce its service model and demonstrate how food rescue can be a valuable tool for these departments. The presentation, attended by a large audience, covered the new County Food Waste Planning Law signed in January, upcoming county food waste reduction goals, and ways public health departments can collaborate with municipal recycling teams to achieve the county's 50% reduction target. Since donations will play a significant role in reaching state diversion targets, Marrone emphasized the existing framework for towns to track recycling data and highlighted the benefits, including grant funding and increased recycling rates. He also discussed future county-municipality mandates focusing on food prevention, recovery, and recycling before disposal and introduced an optional food waste survey that health departments can include in annual license renewals to educate licensed food waste generators on the importance of donating excess food and recycling as needed. This survey not only serves an educational purpose but also requires businesses to report on food waste haulers and donations, including material estimates, so the municipal recycling coordinator can monitor progress and gather county data. Also, as part of this presentation, the MCMUA introduced our past and current ongoing projects, which aim to reduce food waste for further replication. The MCMUA was also asked to speak at several other meetings with organization partners, including the Morris Regional Public Health Partnership Meeting on Food Redirection on October 29 and the NJACCHO small health department forum on December 2.

Marrone Appointed to Serve on the State's Plastics Advisory Council:

In late August and again in September, Marrone was contacted by the NJDEP regarding serving on the [Plastics Advisory Council \(PAC\)](#) as a governor-appointed member. After a recent vacancy, several NJDEP members voiced their recommendation, with one stating they "strongly recommend Marrone for the Council, citing his strong experience and work in the field of solid waste and recycling", noting that Marrone would "bring valuable leadership, extensive experience, and a strong record of success to the PAC's work," and put forward his name to the governor's office for appointment. Marrone will represent the environmental community on behalf of the 21 County Recycling Coordinators and the Association of New Jersey Recyclers.

The "Get Past Plastic Law" created the 16-member PAC within the DEP. The PAC oversees the law's implementation and assesses its success in reducing single-use plastics and plastic waste across the state. It must

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also report on these efforts and suggest legislative or administrative improvements. Furthermore, the law mandates that the PAC study:

1. The environmental and public health impacts of single-use plastics and microplastics;
2. Healthy, environmentally friendly alternatives to single-use plastics;
3. Strategies and policies to boost plastics' recyclability and minimize their environmental entry;
4. The technological feasibility of increasing recycled content in consumer plastics and expanding plastic types produced from recycled materials;
5. Ways to promote markets for post-consumer recycled plastics, including state and local purchasing and procurement practices.

On September 28, Marrone met with several NJDEP and Council Members for an onboarding session to review expectations, goals, and next steps for further exploration. On October 14, Marrone will attend the next Policy Subcommittee meeting to review ongoing initiatives, and the Plastics Advisory Council General meeting on October 20 to align efforts on the committee's fourth-year report.

Municipal Tonnage Grant (MTG) 30-Day Audit 2024 Reporting Data Update:

On September 29, the NJDEP announced its initial data estimates for the 2024 municipal tonnage grant submissions. All towns have 30 days to review and verify their reports, with Municipal Recycling Coordinators instructed to compare their 2024 MTG-reported recycling and solid waste data against the state's figures. This year, the review period has been reduced to 20 days to facilitate faster grant disbursements to municipalities. While all municipalities are expected to review and inform the NJDEP of any discrepancies, the MCMUA reviewed data for all municipalities to identify overarching error trends in their calculations, as follows, to ensure the most accurate reporting for our County, as historic trends have shown that less than a quarter of our municipalities perform this check.

Municipal Recycling Total Review:

- Eight towns have no reporting errors according to our calculations.
- Five towns had large issues with their calculations that did not align with our MCMUA records. This could be a town or DEP reporting error; ultimately, these towns must correct any errors and were directed to do so once we brought the discrepancies to their attention.
- Twenty-six towns had issues with only the #24 category, "Other Material Not Listed." The #24 category is further broken down into "Fluorescent Lights", "Other Material Not Listed", Paints & Stains", and "Batteries (Dry Cell)." The NJDEP failed to report 3 of the 4 subcategories for #24.
 - It is estimated that the NJDEP overlooked as much as 1,394.00 tons in the #24 category, amounting to approximately \$181.22 at the REA rate of \$0.13 per ton.
 - This does not include statistics for the five towns with major reporting issues but would result in even higher grant payouts if found conclusive.
 - These twenty-six towns were also notified of these errors and instructed to inform the DEP directly of any further notes they find.

Municipal Disposal Total Review:

The MCMUA cross-referenced NJDEP-reported solid waste totals with the MCMUA Transfer station data and found that DEP overreported 10,870.73 tons of solid waste in 2024, with Morristown and Parsippany showing the largest reported differences of 1,137.04 and 1,365.32 tons. The less trash reported, the higher the

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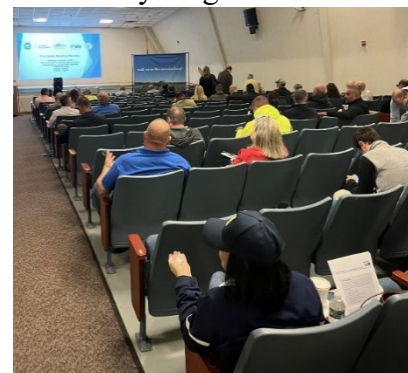
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recycling rates will be for municipalities and, therefore, for Morris County. The MCMUA has requested the DEP disposal data to cross-check their information for accuracy, as done in previous years.

As previously noted, while we expect our Morris County municipalities to submit their noted changes, the MCMUA has submitted a detailed, countywide response covering the aforementioned solid waste and recycling discrepancies to the Bureau of Planning and Licensing for review. To date, only three municipalities have copied the MCMUA on their responses, noting their issues as the October 12 deadline approaches.

MCMUA Hosts its Fourth MRC Meeting of the 2026 Calendar Year:

On September 23, the MCMUA, along with four other counties: Bergen, Essex, Hudson, and Passaic, held their regional recycling coordinator meeting at the NJSEA, located at 1 DeKorte Park Plaza in Lyndhurst, NJ 07071, in the auditorium of the former environmental center. The meeting brought together over 100 municipal, county, and state recycling professionals and provided a full day of solid waste and recycling education and resources. The MCMUA handled all preparation work, organization, moderation, paperwork, state-mandated summaries, and cataloging for the event, as well as applying for credits for its participation. Speakers included the NJDEP, which discussed updates on the new County Food Waste Planning Law/Tiered Composting, the Scrap Tire Recycling Law, E-Waste Reporting Forms, and the Single-Use Utensil and Condiment Law. Updates were also provided on the status of current recycling markets and pending legislation, ANJR updates, a presentation from the Flooring Foundation about its new recycling facility in Somerset County, information on food waste recycling programs from Montclair and Leonia Townships, and a report from the Meadowlands Environmental Commission on school field trips and programs, followed by a tour of the Environmental Center grounds led by their on-site teaching staff. With the recycling coordinators from two other counties leaving their positions before the meeting, Morris led the event activities and ensured it was successful. Next year's meeting will be held at the Passaic County Public Safety Academy in Wayne in the spring of 2027.



MCMUA Presents at the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions Annual Symposium:

On September 25, the Solid Waste Planning Division attended the ANJEC 2026 Environmental Congress at Rutgers University, New Brunswick. The event started with remarks from NJDEP Commissioner Potosnak, who provided environmental updates from the Sherrill administration. The day featured workshops on environmental protection, sustainability, regulatory issues, and water quality, along with examples of projects from environmental commissions statewide. Three Morris County municipalities, Morristown, Morris Township, and Mendham Township, attended and participated in discussions. During the "Environmental Advocacy Tools" session, Dolan discussed current food waste issues, the new county law promoting food waste diversion, municipal actions to reduce waste, and her successful food waste drop-off program pilot, which she developed as a member of Morristown's Environmental Commission. Presenting through ANJEC allowed Dolan and



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the MCMUA to connect with regional environmental commission members, positioning the MCMUA as a resource for food waste diversion and fostering partnerships for outreach and broader diversion efforts. Following the presentation, Marrone and Dolan have a follow-up meeting with ANJEC scheduled for October 16 to explore potential collaborations and how ANJEC can support municipal waste reduction in Morris and beyond.

2026 MCMUA Enhances Partnerships with Morris County Environmental Commissions:

Since announcing the five winning municipalities in our Recycling Enhancement Mini-Grant awards for Environmental Commissions, our awardees have been actively pursuing their waste diversion objectives. Throughout September, Marrone regularly consulted with recipients, offering guidance and support. Marrone and Dolan collaborated to engage additional county municipalities about mini-grant opportunities, narrowing focus and funding toward four new grants for projects with innovative ideas. Dolan also built on last month's research and the county-wide Environmental Commission listing by connecting with individuals who can take on leadership roles in those volunteer roles. These interactions will inform upcoming Environmental Commission case studies, a spring 2027 gathering for environmental commissions to share ideas, and the development of a sustainability hub with biannual meetings for environmental commission and green team members in a more regular format. Meanwhile, Dolan continues partnering with other Environmental Commissions and Green Teams across the county to explore collaborations and establish shared goals.

Solid Waste Planning Division Develops its End-of-Year and 2027 Calendar Year Plan:

In September and October, the Division began preparing and planning its 2027 calendar, covering special projects, grant commitments, regulatory outlooks, and shared service obligations. Marrone and Chavanne also updated the billing sheets the Finance Department uses for the remainder of 2026 and forecast 2027 rate increases, including specifications to streamline billing. These sheets include all current contracts, broken down into monthly and annual payments, additional fees, mailing addresses, contract expirations, and additional notes. Staff also created one large file that includes all 2027 contracts to accommodate contracts whose contract year changes mid-year. By the numbers, the MCMUA can expect the annual municipal curbside contracts to total ~\$2,589,107.61. This does not include marketing costs or costs per pull at recycling depots or events and may change as contracts develop. Schools with contracts account for an additional \$170,544.24, and complexes account for \$106,168.06 in 2027. Other entities the MCMUA is contracted with do not have a lump-sum annual cost and are based on pulls per year. These are not included in these figures.

Morris County Clean Communities Program

New Jersey Clean Communities Council Best Practices Committee:

In September, Chavanne, a member of the NJCCC Best Practices Committee, collaborated with other committee members throughout the month to review and update the Council's website. Over the coming months, the NJCCC plans a comprehensive overhaul of the NJClean.org website, aiming to complete it in mid-October to align with the graduation of the new Clean Communities Coordinator certification cohort. Chavanne specifically revised part of the litter cleanup webpage on NJClean.org, fixing broken links and photographs, adding NJDEP information on illegal dumping, and including their reporting hotline. Additionally, Chavanne developed a general Clean Communities Coordinator Handbook and an Excel-based statistical report expenditure tracker to be added to the site for statewide use, along with other games and resources for coordinators. Marrone and

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Chavanne also collaborated to update resources such as assemblies, presentations, and field trip vendor examples so coordinators can use grant funding for program education.

MCMUA Hosts its Annual In-Person Clean Communities Coordinator Meeting:

On September 16, the MCMUA held its annual in-person Clean Communities meeting at the Kean Skylands Campus in Oak Ridge. Forty-six people attended, mostly Morris County municipal coordinators, with some from outside the county seeking to enhance their own programs. The event featured an overview of the Morris County Program, updates, related resources, a review of the revised website, a campus tour, and discussions on its history and educational initiatives. Part of the meeting focused on the new “[Single-Use Utensil and Condiment Law](#),” which bans food service businesses from providing single-use utensils and condiments under certain conditions and requires DEP to run an education campaign to promote reducing these items. Several speakers presented, including Q-Star Technologies on anti-littering and illegal dumping prevention, GOATOTE on their reusable bag initiative, the New Jersey School of Conservation on water pollution prevention, and the Kean University Students Sustainability Squad on their outreach and sustainability efforts. The meeting concluded with updates from the NJ Clean Communities Council’s program, led by the Executive Director, highlighting their new “Love Where You Learn” campaign to cut litter in schools, and Chavanne sharing new educational resources for the upcoming grant cycle. Attendees, both local and from outside Morris County, held the training in high regard and responded positively.



Statistical Report Submission Update:

On September 14, the NJCCC provided the county coordinators with the updated list of submitted and outstanding Clean Communities statistical report submissions to date. So far, 32 out of 39 Morris County municipalities have submitted their 2025 reports. Chavanne continues to work with the seven municipalities that still need to submit their reports, as well as several others with outstanding past reports. Notably, two of the towns' coordinators told us they cannot submit reports because their municipalities have not cooperated in providing data. Chavanne and the NJCCC’s Executive Director plan to conduct targeted outreach in mid to late October to tackle this challenge. Moreover, a majority of our towns have now regained compliance with the NJCCC program by submitting reports from 2022-2025. The goal is to ensure all towns understand their reporting responsibilities and adhere to guidelines for the 2026 grant submission, further improving reporting rates.

New NJCCC Guideline for Reusable Bag Collection and Reuse Campaigns:

Governor Murphy signed S-3511 on July 22, 2025. This law, designated as [P.L. 2025 c. 106](#), permanently allocates \$500,000 annually from the “Clean Communities Program Fund” to the Department of Environmental Protection to support public outreach on reducing single-use plastics. The fund gathers money from fees paid by manufacturers, wholesalers, distributors, and retailers of litter-producing products, along with penalties and voluntary donations. Initially, these funds helped finance education and law enforcement for the single-use plastics ban until 2023, including a bag redistribution program that collects reusable bags for redistribution to

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food banks, pantries, and food programs. The law took effect immediately, and in spring 2026, the NJCCC and NJDEP broadened their Clean Communities spending guidelines to include bag collection and reuse programs as eligible expenses. This change followed the high volume of discarded reusable bags. Several municipalities, such as Montville, have already initiated bag reuse programs, often linking them with events like shredding drives to boost participation. The MCMUA is exploring funding a temporary event or fixed collection point at the Interfaith Food Pantry and resource center in Parsippany now that recycling options for bags unsuitable for donation are emerging with several vendors.

Morris County Clean Communities Sponsored County Roadway Cleanup(s):

In September, the Morris County Clean Communities Litter Abatement Program continued its efforts to remove litter from county roads, collaborating with the contractor Adopt-A-Highway. Throughout the month, Division Team Members conducted on-road searches in several areas previously identified as having increased litter. The team evaluated and marked several roadway sections for potential future cleanups. On October 2, the team cleared litter around the Parsippany Transfer Station and nearby roads, with 6 volunteers covering 2.5 miles. They collected 40 bags of trash and 17 bags of recyclables. They also disposed of about 51 pounds of miscellaneous materials, including large quantities of litter such as wooden pallets, rigid plastics, Styrofoam pieces, ceiling tiles, a pot planter, and carpets.