

District Recycling Coordinator Monthly Board Report

August 2026

Executive Summary

In August 2026, the finalized single-stream recycling tip fee at Republic Services was negative \$82.03 per ton, \$0.27 more favorable than July's finalized rate of negative \$82.30. Fiber and metals remained firm while plastics stayed weak. Shared-service drafts for Boonton (curbside/depot renewal) and Washington Township (scrap-metal container amendment) are with those municipalities for review. The 2024 Recycling Enhancement Act grant was formally closed on September 1, and the 2025 REA agreement was signed and returned to NJDEP. Staff convened a September 2 NJDEP/NJDA/MCDPH forum on food-waste recycling compliance, with a follow-up set for September 29. Five Environmental Commission mini-grant projects are underway, and additional municipalities have requested support. Upcoming coordinator events include the Clean Communities meeting on September 16 and the five-county MRC meeting on September 23.

Recycling Market and Operations Report Update

In August, the finalized single-stream recycling rate with Republic Services was negative \$82.03 per ton, a \$0.27 increase from the previous month's finalized rate of negative \$82.30 per ton.

In August and early September, recycling markets in the Northeast US saw a clear split across commodity types in our sector. Fiber and metals remain resilient domestic assets, while plastics face severe pricing and infrastructure headwinds.

The post-consumer plastics market is facing significant downward pressure due to bearish trends and supply surpluses. This is mainly caused by decreasing virgin resin prices and structural bottlenecks. Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET) bale prices have remained around 2-3 cents per pound, below summer peaks and inconsistent with seasonal beverage sales increases. Infrastructure problems worsened the drop through a domino effect after domestic PET mill closures created localized oversupply. Combined with high regional diesel and freight costs, many brokers struggle to economically transport heavy, low-value plastic bales from the Northeast to distant converters. Tariffs between the U.S. and Canada, along with retaliatory actions, are expected to influence recycled plastics markets and resin demand, especially if production costs increase. Ongoing trade uncertainties and regulatory changes can disrupt supply chains, even with exemptions for raw recycled plastics. Elevated tariffs on finished products and molds could raise operating costs, encourage local sourcing, limit export opportunities for recycled resins, and diminish their market value.

On paper and fiber pricing, the upward trend in fiber grades continues to stabilize our single-stream rate this month, consistent with previous months. The average price for Old Corrugated Containers (OCC) increased by \$5 per ton this month and again in September, marking a pattern that started in January. This rise has been driven by steady domestic mill demand as manufacturing shifts toward higher incorporation of recycled fibers. Sorted Residential Papers also experienced similar increases, beginning in June. The main factors behind August's stable fiber prices include seasonal influences like back-to-school production, along with containerboard mills increasing inventory ahead of fall and holiday shipping.

Scrap metals like steel and aluminum remain steady, supporting a resilient, balanced market. These commodities have maintained a quiet yet notably strong position, shielding operators from the declines seen in plastics. Used beverage containers have been priced high, around 100 cents per pound since May, supported by the high seasonal demand for canned drinks through late summer. Steel cans also stayed strong, averaging \$207.50 per ton during this period. In terms of trade dynamics, August scrap transactions were mostly balanced. Limited

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export opportunities and summer mill maintenance restricted large volume increases, but low domestic mill inventories helped sustain firm prices for scrap steel and aluminum.

The 2026 outlook for Northeast recycling shows a varied recovery. Seasonal manufacturing, ESG targets, and economic stabilization will drive mixed material performance. Plastics may bottom out and stay flat through Q4. Regional projects like Republic Services' Pennsylvania Polymer Center, expected to be operational by early 2027, could support baseline throughput and stabilize prices, helping meet corporate PCR goals and support pricing. Fiber remains strong, with OCC likely to rise again in late 2026, aided by clearer trade tariffs and stable logistics. Domestic paper mills seek clean fiber, and Q4 holiday e-commerce boosts demand for residential paper, maintaining regional prices. Metals may slow after Labor Day as beverage container supply drops, but high domestic mill inventories keep prices stable, offsetting declining plastic margins.



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

Ongoing Shared Service Agreements and Contract Activities

In August, Marrone and Chavanne continued follow-up conversations and completed edits to existing drafts of shared service agreements for the following towns and their respective contracts, which now rest with those municipalities 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.*

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

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

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

- MCMUA and the New Jersey Association of New Jersey Recyclers (ANJR) Joint Efforts
- MCMUA Conducts Research on Food Waste and Strategically Plans Its Future Initiatives
- MCMUA Sponsored Internship with Morris County's Higher Learning Institutions
- MCMUA Attends the Rockaway Borough Night Out Event
- MCMUA Attends the Tri-Town Night Out Event
- MCMUA Attends the NJDEP Sustainability Speaker Series (S3) on Restaurant Sustainability
- MCMUA Assists with Education and Compliance for Curbside Recycling in Hanover Township
- MCMUA Hosts In-Person MRC Recycling Facility Tours for its Coordinators and Partners

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- MCMUA & MCDPH Recycling Education and Inspections
- Solid Waste Planning Division Assignment Update
- MCMUA Attends NJ Food Waste Reduction & Composting Webinar
- MCMUA Recycling Public Outreach Educational Materials and Efforts
- MCMUA Attends the Rutgers Certified Recycling Professionals Course
- MCMUA Updates its Online Public Decal Order Form

Solid Waste Planning Activities and Special Projects

MCMUA, NJDEP, and NJDA Work to Create Food Waste Recycling Regulatory Education:

After the new County Food Waste Planning Law was signed in January, Marrone began researching existing and upcoming food waste recycling and composting regulations. He communicated with fellow County Coordinators and State Agencies to develop a guidance document that clarifies the current regulatory framework and fosters better collaboration across statewide partners. The launch of our mini-grant program for municipal environmental commissions further raised additional questions about compliance, expanding drop-off sites, managing micro haulers servicing these sites and residential pickups, and appropriate locations for disposal of collected materials. As these questions arose, along with our on-the-ground observations and in the absence of clear state guidance, Marrone engaged with officials from the NJDEP's Division of Sustainable Waste Permitting Bureau, Bureau of Recycling, Bureau of Solid Waste Planning and Licensing, and the Bureau of Solid Waste and Compliance & Enforcement to understand relevant regulations and permitting requirements. Additionally, he consulted the NJ Department of Agriculture's Division of Agricultural and Natural Resources and Division of Animal Health to discuss current rules under the "Right-to-Farm Act," NJ Farmland Preservation Program, and regulations concerning food waste on farms and feeding food scraps to animals. Marrone also coordinated with colleagues in Middlesex County, Rutgers, and the NJ Composting Council to include findings in the County Food Waste Planning Guidance Document being developed for NJDEP. These discussions revealed that the state has limited awareness of the extent of on-the-ground food waste activities, especially municipal food waste drop-off programs and their growing popularity, which is problematic as these sites are expanding beyond municipal depots into town-owned and private business locations. Town administrators have requested clearer guidance on these matters from the MCMUA, which Marrone has communicated to these state agencies. Additionally, the growth of food waste recycling revealed that a micro hauler in our area was collecting material and delivering it to an unpermitted farm for onsite composting, where excess food scraps were fed to animals without proper permits. This situation creates regulatory and animal health-related issues for the NJDA, as clear, up-to-date guidance for operating in this space is lacking.

Based on these findings and after multiple discussions with each group, it became clear that both Departments need to collaborate, meet, and unify their efforts to thoroughly understand the current food waste recycling operations in the field. This involves creating clear educational materials on how to operate in this space and amending New Jersey's regulatory framework to support or bar certain efforts if the Counties are to work toward adhering to their state-mandated food waste recycling goals. Consequently, on September 2, Marrone organized a large forum with representatives from both Departments, along with our Morris County Division of Public Health and MCMUA. Marrone opened the meeting by thanking everyone for participating in the collaboration and focusing on clear, concise education for our municipal and county partners. He also addressed current issues and needed clarifications regarding food waste recycling, sharing observations from MCMUA and MCDPH over recent years. Each department contributed its expertise, leading to a discussion on how to improve each program. At the end of the meeting, it was communicated that the NJDEP and NJDA will establish a working

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group and communicate throughout the month to develop a compliance advisory for release in October. A second large forum meeting is scheduled for September 29 to review the state's progress and realign efforts. Additionally, the Director and Assistant Director of the Division of Sustainable Waste Management will present at the September 15 County Recycling Coordinator Meeting to update the group on our initiatives.

Recycling Enhancement Act (REA) Tax Grant Submission Updates:

In August, Marrone and Chavanne finalized last year's REA Grant (2024) by submitting the final deliverables and financial documents to NJDEP. Although MCMUA completed our grant before the 2025 deadline, the process follows the State's slower pace, with sections opening for submission, review, and closeout, making it lengthy. As a result, the MCMUA's REA Grant was officially closed and filed on September 1, 2026, and we received an official letter for our records. Still, MCMUA's consistent pace and prompt reporting keep us ahead of many counties, which are still several years behind in their reporting.

Regarding the 2025 REA Grant application, we submitted it before the June 17 deadline. After review, we received the grant agreement back for signature and signed it on August 5. It is now with NJDEP for their signature to finalize the agreement before their finance office can process a payment to us. Once completed, MCMUA will begin submitting our first 6-month grant status and financial reports. Although the NJDEP review process has improved, the initial application release for the grant period was significantly delayed. NJDEP hopes to send checks to counties next month, an improvement over last year. A detailed update will be provided at the September 15 County Recycling Coordinator Meeting.

MCMUA MRC and CCC Future Meeting Planning:

In August, the MCMUA Solid Waste Planning Team worked to finalize the details of their upcoming coordinator meetings as follows:

MCMUA Plans for its Fourth MRC Meeting of the 2026 Calendar Year:

In August, Marrone continued planning for the upcoming fourth MRC meeting, involving five counties: Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Morris, and Passaic. The regional recycling coordinator meeting is scheduled to take place again at the NJSEA, located at 1 DeKorte Park Plaza in Lyndhurst, NJ 07071, in the auditorium of the former environmental center. This year's event is set for Wednesday, September 23, from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM. During that time, Marrone held several follow-up discussions with the other county coordinators to confirm speakers and finalize the agenda. The MCMUA also handles all paperwork, state-mandated summaries, and cataloging for the event, as well as applying for credits for its participation in this meeting. Confirmed speakers include the NJDEP, which will discuss updates on the new County Food Waste Planning Law/Tiered Composting, the Scrap Tire Recycling Law, E-Waste Reporting Forms, and the 'Skip the Stuff' (Cut the Cutlery) Campaign. There will also be updates on recycling markets and 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 onsite teaching staff. With the recycling coordinators from two other counties leaving their positions in late August and early September, Bergen's coordinator retired, and Hudson's coordinator moved to a different role, Morris will be taking point in leading the event activities and ensuring a successful event. A last-minute preparation meeting

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is scheduled for September 14 to ensure all speakers are prepared and that PowerPoints and educational materials are provided before the event for use at the meeting.

MCMUA Plans for its Annual Clean Communities Coordinator Meeting:

In August, Chavanne focused on finalizing educational materials, meeting details, and specifications for the upcoming Morris County Clean Communities Coordinator meeting. Set for Wednesday, September 16, at Kean Skylands Campus in Oak Ridge, NJ, the event will include 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 programs. Several speakers will present, such as 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 projects. Additionally, Chavanne created new educational resources for our coordinators for the upcoming grant cycle, which she will share at the meeting. In addition to opening the meeting to our Morris County coordinators, we also opened it to fellow county coordinators across the state to increase education within our group. As a result, the meeting now has a waitlist, as the venue can hold only 50 people.

MCMUA Plans for its Fifth MRC Meeting of the 2026 Calendar Year:

In August, Marrone began planning the final MRC meeting of the year, scheduled to include tours of the MCMUA's Mount Olive Transfer Station, Household Hazardous Waste Facility, and Mount Olive Vegetative Waste Recycling Facility. These visits aim to give MRCs and municipal partners a clearer understanding of MCMUA operations and how each site handles waste and recycling. The meeting will also include training to ensure participants are well informed about operations, enabling them to help residents with questions about these programs after seeing them in action.

2026 MCMUA Recycling Enhancement Mini-Grant Programs for Environmental Commissions:

After last month's Recycling Enhancement Mini-Grant Program for Environmental Commissions announcement for five of our Morris County towns, the grant awardees have been hard at work on their waste diversion goals. Many have already begun efforts, while others have completed planning and moved into implementation. As a reminder, the 2026 Waste Reduction and Recycling Mini-Grant recipients are:

- **Mendham Borough** – Residential Food Waste Collection Program
- **Mendham Township** – Plastic Film Recycling Pilot Program & Backyard Composting Training and Starter Kit Program
- **Morris Township** – Residential Food Waste Collection and Drop-off Pilot
- **Morristown** – Residential Food Waste Collection and Drop-off Pilot
- **Rockaway Township** – CCTV Cameras for its Curbside Recycling Trucks to monitor for recycling contamination and provide proper recycling education practices to residents.

Throughout August, Marrone consistently checked in with recipients to provide guidance and support. Dolan also worked with the Morristown and Morris Township Environmental Commissions during this time to answer questions and provide regulatory insights to support further program growth. Several municipalities, upon learning about these grants last month, contacted the MCMUA to ask about additional grant options. In response, Marrone and Dolan worked together to contact other county municipalities about mini-grant opportunities,

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focusing efforts and funding on four additional grants for applicants with innovative project ideas. These towns include Denville, Rockaway Borough, Kinnelon, Chatham Borough, and Chatham Township. Rockaway Borough is most enthusiastic, planning a Styrofoam recycling pilot with Long Hill, and Chatham Township aims to start a food waste drop-off program at its DPW yard. Dolan remains engaged with other Environmental Commissions and Green Teams across the County to explore potential partnerships and set shared goals.

Solid Waste Planning and Curbside Operations Work on Recycling Collection Dates & Calendars:

In August, the Solid Waste Planning and Operations Team started updating its annual collection calendar for contract partners. They first review major holidays, compare them with affected collection days, and collaborate with Operations to identify suitable make-up days within the current schedule. They also assign union blackout days when Operations cannot schedule time off, especially during busy periods affected by holiday make-up days on previously lighter workdays. These dates, approved by the MCMUA, are pending confirmation of the County of Morris work calendar for 2027, which is expected at the end of September or early October before finalizing and publishing. Meanwhile, the Planning Division has begun updating municipal and partner collection calendars for distribution to them and other media outlets, such as the Town Planner. Although many requestors use our calendar, as noted to the right, others incorporate our dates into their own calendars, often requesting these dates as early as October.

TOWN OF BOONTON 2027 RECYCLING CALENDAR			
SINGLE-STREAM RECYCLING COLLECTION EVERY OTHER THURSDAY			
January January 14 January 28	February February 11 February 25	March March 11 March 25	April April 8 April 22
May May 6 May 20	June June 3 June 17	July July 1 July 15 July 29	August August 12 August 26
September September 9 September 23	October October 7 October 21	November November 4 November 18	December December 2 December 16 December 30
ALWAYS RECYCLE Aluminum & steel/tin cans Glass bottles & jars Paper Plastic containers #1, 2, & 5 Cardboard Aseptic cartons			
RECYCLE RIGHT • Do not bag recyclables. Materials should be loose in the container. • Recyclables should be clean, empty, and dry. • No Styrofoam of any kind. • No shredded paper. • Flatten cardboard boxes.			
COLLECTION TIPS • Recycling containers must be placed at the curb no later than 6am on collection day. • Missed recycling must be reported by 10am the day following collection. Note: late set outs are not a missed collection. • Containers must be no larger than 32 gallons and under 50 lbs.			

Municipalities outside our collection service area, such as Montville and Mountain Lakes, have asked the MCMUA to help develop their own collection calendars for residents. The MCMUA provided these towns with a draft version of its calendar via CANVA and collaborated directly with their MRC within the document to make revisions, enhance visibility, and support educational efforts. This partnership aims to make the recycling process more engaging for residents outside our service contract and increase overall curbside recycling rates.

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

In August and September, the Division completed its 2026 end-of-year budget and outlined its 2027 calendar, covering special projects, grant commitments, regulatory outlooks, and shared service obligations. This includes plans to close the 2025 REA grant and the Division's environmental development operating line, along with the remaining 2026 Clean Communities Grant, active until June 2027. For special projects, the MCMUA intends to distribute mini-grants for municipal recycling improvements and school food waste reduction and offers educational courses such as "Teach-the-Teacher" on food waste prevention and composting, Recycling Ambassador courses, and trainings for recycling and clean communities coordinators. Additionally, the Division developed 2027 projections, revenue estimates, and billing forecasts, factoring in equipment costs for both anticipated and unforeseen shared service requests, as well as potential revenue from collection agreements and billing rates for the Finance Division.

MCMUA and MCDPH Collaborations:

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In August, MCMUA developed a food waste presentation and educational materials for the 2026 NJACCHO webinar, which will be held on September 17. The forum will bring County and City Officials across the state together and allow this group to learn about legislation that will directly affect their operations. As a result, the MCMUA and MCDPH worked together to tailor this event, emphasizing the new County Food Waste Planning Law, its requirements, and how these groups can support their municipal counterparts in achieving state goals, as food donation will play a crucial role in the state's broader objectives. In our segment, Marrone will highlight Morris County's food waste initiatives and upcoming projects. We will also provide a voluntary food waste survey and educational materials to local businesses during their annual license renewal, including information on legislation, the benefits of donation, waste-reduction tips, and a section for recycling/donation details. The aim is to integrate the survey and educational materials into the retail food license renewal process, with completed surveys submitted back alongside the renewal application. This data will then be shared with the Municipal Recycling Coordinator to report on food waste recycling, boost recycling rates, and support grant opportunities. Even if businesses don't return the survey, they will receive information on the benefits of donation and relevant educational resources. In addition to MCMUA's presentation, we invited the food rescue organization "Share My Meals," which connects donors of excess food with recipients in need, so it doesn't go to waste. This group will present on their work with the Meal Recovery Coalition, a statewide coalition of organizations that bring together cross-sector leaders with a shared goal: making meal recovery the norm in New Jersey. They will discuss their recently created [New Jersey Food Donation Guidance Document](#) for use with this group as it relates to their efforts.

Morris County Clean Communities Program

New Jersey Clean Communities Council Best Practices Committee:

In August, Chavanne, a member of the NJCCC Best Practices Committee, met with other committee members several times to review and update the Council's website. Over the next few months, the NJCCC is planning a sitewide revamp of the NJClean.org website, with a mid-October deadline to coincide with the graduation of the new Clean Communities Coordinator certification cohort. Chavanne is tasked with creating a generalized version of the MCMUA CCC Handbook for the NJCCC to share statewide to help municipalities with their programs. The MCMUA Clean Communities Budget Template Excel file will also be added to the NJ Clean website for coordinators statewide to use. Chavanne is also helping update the cleanup section of the website to ensure all information is up to date and all links work.

Morris County Clean Communities Mini-Grants, Update:

In August, Chavanne updated our Clean Communities mini-grant guidelines and application process for school cleanups, educational, and non-profit mini-grants. Because the overall program received less grant funding in 2026 from the State, non-profits will likely see funding reduced by up to \$500, depending on the number of applications received. To make applying easier, we created interactive PDFs that can be filled out virtually. These are linked on the MCMUA Clean Communities webpage: [Clean Communities Public Grants – MCMUA News](#). With the opening of the new grant period, we have already received several applications for our educational mini-grants in advance of the 2027 calendar year.

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

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In August, the Morris County Clean Communities Litter Abatement Program continued its efforts to remove litter from county roads, working with the contractor Adopt-A-Highway. Throughout the month, Division Team Members conducted on-road searches in several areas listed in past cleanups as having increased litter. Several stretches of road in Parsippany, Morristown, Mount Olive, and Mine Hill were identified for future potential cleanups.