

State's Landfills Are Off-Limits For Construction and Demolition 5/15/2006**By William J. Angelo**

Massachusetts is about to become the first state in the nation to ban certain construction and demolition materials from landfills. The ban is designed to help preserve limited landfill capacity and increase recycling, but it already is generating opposition.

The Massachusetts Dept. of Environmental Protection on July 1 will begin enforcing a selective statewide ban on the disposal of asphalt pavement, brick, concrete, metal and wood. "Some counties and cities in the U.S. have banned materials but this is the first statewide ban," says Edmund J. Coletta, MDEP spokesman. "We want to increase recycling and reduce the waste stream and the big target is construction and demolition, but we are examining other items for possible future bans." The rules exempt loads under 5 cu yd or with less than 20% of covered materials.



Captured. Waste will have new life as recycled products instead of landfill clutter. (Photo: General Kinematics)



Material recovery in action
(Photo: Costello Dismantling)

The ban is part of a ten-year master plan to reduce non-municipal solid waste by 88% by 2010. It also is geared toward promoting development of in-state processing businesses to supply recycled materials for road construction, structural fill and other uses. All solid waste facilities were required to submit a compliance plan in April. There are about 20 landfills in the state today, down from 130 in the early 1990s.

The state currently has 10 construction and demolition waste processing facilities and it uses two more in New Hampshire. They provide a total capacity of 2.1 million tons per year. Four new plants will shortly add another 1.1 million tons per year.

The effort already has run into unlikely opposition. The Construction Materials Recycling Association, Eola, Ill., is concerned about alternative daily cover (ADC)-dirt and materials 3 in. or shorter (fines) that commonly are used as landfill cover. These also will be restricted from landfills. "The disposal ban is a wonderful concept arrived at with stakeholder input and rightfully does not include gypsum wallboard and asphalt shingles because there is a limited aftermarket," says William M. Turley, CMRA executive director. But ADC should be allowed in landfills, he says. "Landfills can't take it and we can't sell it, so reprocessing plants won't last without a market outlet," he explains.

Coletta is confident fines will not be a problem. "We're trying to bring the parties together to resolve the issue," he says.

Others support the rules. **"We look at buildings as bank accounts and figure out how to take them apart while preserving the assets," says Amy Bauman, vice president, greenGoat, Somerville.** "The regulation is well informed because DEP won't consider banning any material for which recycling markets aren't ready to accept 75% of calculated waste stream."

Some contractors also accept the ban. "It is a minor change from what we are already doing because of our many LEED projects," says Daniel P. McQuade, president of Tishman Construction Corp. of New England, Boston. "It is just a question of getting used to the new process."

"I fully expect other states to follow," says Turley. "But this is a front-end ban going after waste generation, so governments should be buying the end product. However, we'd rather see market stimulation over regulation because recycling rates and usage will improve with a strong demand."