

# Committee Report

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

**February 5, 2019**

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**REPORT OF COMMITTEE**

**The Committee on Environment and Agriculture to  
which was referred HB 617,**

**AN ACT establishing a committee to study recycling  
streams in New Hampshire. Having considered the  
same, report the same with the recommendation that the  
bill OUGHT TO PASS.**

**Rep. Peter Bixby**

**FOR THE COMMITTEE**

## COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee:	Environment and Agriculture
Bill Number:	HB 617
Title:	establishing a committee to study recycling streams in New Hampshire.
Date:	February 5, 2019
Consent Calendar:	CONSENT
Recommendation:	OUGHT TO PASS

### STATEMENT OF INTENT

This bill creates a study committee to investigate the condition of recycling programs in NH and consider possible legislative remedies. While recycling programs used to pay for themselves through the sale of recycled materials, changing market conditions have reduced the value of these materials and created challenges for municipal recycling programs. The loss of recycling revenue is beginning to make municipal solid waste programs more expensive for property taxpayers, and as long-term contracts get renewed, this trend is likely to get worse. Furthermore, the reduced value of recyclables could lead to more of them ending up in landfills at the same time as the state's landfill capacity is shrinking and getting more expensive. This bill had strong support from the Department of Environmental Services, representatives of towns, and the NH Municipal Association. There was no opposition.

Vote 19-0.

Rep. Peter Bixby  
FOR THE COMMITTEE

Original: House Clerk  
Cc: Committee Bill File

# COMMITTEE REPORT

COMMITTEE: E + A

BILL NUMBER: HB 617

TITLE: Establishing a Committee to study recycling streams in NJ

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ CONSENT CALENDAR: YES  NO

- OUGHT TO PASS
- OUGHT TO PASS W/ AMENDMENT
- INEXPEDIENT TO LEGISLATE
- INTERIM STUDY (Available only 2<sup>nd</sup> year of biennium)

Amendment No.  
\_\_\_\_\_

STATEMENT OF INTENT:

Report emailed

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COMMITTEE VOTE: 19-0

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

- Copy to Committee Bill File
- Use Another Report for Minority Report

Rep. *[Signature]*  
For the Committee

## Committee report on HB 617

HB 617 creates a study committee to investigate the condition of recycling programs in NH and consider possible legislative remedies. While recycling programs used to pay for themselves through the sale of recycled materials, changing market conditions have reduced the value of these materials and created challenges for municipal recycling programs. The loss of recycling revenue is beginning to make municipal solid waste programs more expensive for property taxpayers, and as long-term contracts get renewed, this trend is likely to get worse. Furthermore, the reduced value of recyclables could lead to more of them ending up in landfills at the same time as the state's landfill capacity is shrinking and getting more expensive. This bill had strong support from DES, representatives of towns, and the Municipal Association, and no opposition.

# Voting Sheets

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE

EXECUTIVE SESSION on HB 617

**BILL TITLE:** establishing a committee to study recycling streams in New Hampshire.

**DATE:** February 5, 2019

**LOB ROOM:** 303

**MOTIONS:** OUGHT TO PASS

Moved by Rep. Bixby

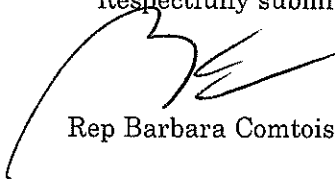
Seconded by Rep. O'Connor

Vote: 19-0

CONSENT CALENDAR: YES

**Statement of Intent:** Refer to Committee Report

Respectfully submitted,



Rep Barbara Comtois, Clerk

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE

EXECUTIVE SESSION on HB 617

BILL TITLE: establishing a committee to study recycling streams in New Hampshire.

DATE: February 5, 2019

LOB ROOM: 303

MOTION: (Please check one box)

- OTP       ITL       Retain (1<sup>st</sup> year)       Adoption of Amendment # \_\_\_\_\_  
 Interim Study (2nd year)      (if offered)

Moved by Rep. Burby      Seconded by Rep. O'Connor      Vote: 19-0

MOTION: (Please check one box)

- OTP       OTP/A       ITL       Retain (1<sup>st</sup> year)       Adoption of Amendment # \_\_\_\_\_  
 Interim Study (2nd year)      (if offered)

Moved by Rep. \_\_\_\_\_      Seconded by Rep. \_\_\_\_\_      Vote: \_\_\_\_\_

MOTION: (Please check one box)

- OTP       OTP/A       ITL       Retain (1<sup>st</sup> year)       Adoption of Amendment # \_\_\_\_\_  
 Interim Study (2nd year)      (if offered)

Moved by Rep. \_\_\_\_\_      Seconded by Rep. \_\_\_\_\_      Vote: \_\_\_\_\_

MOTION: (Please check one box)

- OTP       OTP/A       ITL       Retain (1<sup>st</sup> year)       Adoption of Amendment # \_\_\_\_\_  
 Interim Study (2nd year)      (if offered)

Moved by Rep. \_\_\_\_\_      Seconded by Rep. \_\_\_\_\_      Vote: \_\_\_\_\_

CONSENT CALENDAR:  YES       NO

Minority Report? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes      \_\_\_\_\_ No      If yes, author, Rep: \_\_\_\_\_      Motion \_\_\_\_\_

Respectfully submitted: [Signature]  
Rep Barbara Comtois, Clerk





2019 SESSION

Environment and Agriculture

Bill #: HB 617 Motion: OTP AM #: \_\_\_\_\_ Exec Session Date: 2/5/19

<u>Members</u>	<u>YEAS</u>	<u>Nays</u>	<u>NV</u>
Gourgue, Amanda L. Chairman	✓		
Bixby, Peter W. Vice Chairman	✓		
Beaulieu, Jane E.	✓		
Ellis, Donna R.	✓		
Richards, Beth S.	✓		
Sofikitis, Catherine M.	✓		
Bouldin, Andrew J.	✓		
Chretien, Jacqueline H.	✓		
Dutzy, Sherry	✓		
McConnell, Liz A.	✓		
Murray, Megan A.	✓		
O'Connor, John T.	✓		
Comtois, Barbara Clerk	✓		
Pearl, Howard C.	✓		
Verville, Kevin			✓
Aron, Judy F.	✓		
Bean, Harry H.	✓		
Furbush, Michael E.	✓		
Melvin, Charles R.	✓		
Viens, Harry H.	✓		
<i>Chan</i> TOTAL VOTE:	19	0	1

# Hearing Minutes

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE

PUBLIC HEARING ON HB 617

**BILL TITLE:** establishing a committee to study recycling streams in New Hampshire.

**DATE:** January 29, 2019

**LOB ROOM:** 303 **Time Public Hearing Called to Order:** 1:45 p.m.

**Time Adjourned:** 2:35 p.m.

**Committee Members:** Reps. Gourgue, Bixby, Comtois, Beaulieu, Ellis, Richards, Sofikitis, Andrew Bouldin, Chretien, Dutzy, McConnell, M. Murray, O'Connor, Pearl, Aron, Bean, Furbush and Melvin

**Bill Sponsors:**

Rep. Ebel

Rep. Turcotte

Rep. Carson

Rep. Tucker

Rep. O'Connor

Rep. Malloy

Sen. Ward

Sen. Watters

Sen. Fuller Clark

TESTIMONY

\* Use asterisk if written testimony and/or amendments are submitted.

**Rep. Karen Ebel** – study NH recycling streams – plastic is just the tip of iceberg – Solid Waste – the need for study is obvious – she is more alarmed about recycling – passed out articles – some towns stopped recycling – problem isn't just with plastic

She is from a small town - daughter of German immigrants – responsibility to reuse our products – New London – doing good for universe but also save tipping fees –

Landfills – the less you recycle the more trash goes into landfills – landfill capacity is not endless

The conversation should also be looking on the front end about the solid waste we are generating – it is just high time to talk about solid waste as a general matter in the state

Rep Bixby – now that you thought about bill do you think you need to increase the scope of the bill – would leave it to committee – Sec 3 line 14 she is lawyer by training line 20 the committee shall report its findings

Follow-up – you wrote this as a committee and not a commission – she thinks a leg study committee can do it more quickly and they can bring all stakeholders they want together

Rep Aaron – do you envision this committee engaging county conservation commissions/selectman – Rep Ebel grew up in NH believes they need to be heard – she would like to hear from as many people as possible

**Rep. Alan Turcotte** – very pleased when asked to co-sponsor bill – he runs transfer station in Allentown – we have a company that takes care of everything – 10 yrs. ago switched over to recycling – company takes away recycling free – anyone who want to throw garbage must pay 70 cents per #

Rep Beaulieu – where do they take the recycling – he thinks up North

Rep Bixby – is it going to landfill or recycling facility? – he is not sure

**Michael Nork** – DES, supports bill – due to recent changes in the world, towns are having difficulty finding recycling avenues for product – prices have plummeted, and plants have seen rising costs

Some towns are being charged for recycling – Although DES does not actively track recycling – they have heard anecdotally that recycling is down

Rep Murray – would DES look at other states/countries regarding their programs – He doesn't know if DES is in a position to do that – we are working on permitting and compliance

Rep Beaulieu – are there any landfills in NH? – there are over 6 Full Time landfills operating in the state – Rochester has been granted an extension – until 2030 – others extended another 5 years but unlikely any new landfills will be granted

**John Dumais – President & CEO of NH Recovery Association & NHtB (NH the Beautiful)**– see handout for testimony

**Mike Durfor – Executive Director for NE Recovery Association** – handout – recycling is intertwined – MA landfill trash being shipped to Virginia – we are currently on the cusp – China Sword – it was not w/out forewarning and sooner or later we will no longer take plastic and mixed paper – so no surprise

E & A committee is vitally important – China Sword similar to banking fiasco in 2008 – all of the material we move for members – w/exception of mixed paper are still working – mixed paper was making you \$40k last year and it now costs \$3k this year – 1<sup>st</sup> ½ of CS is dangerous 2<sup>nd</sup> ½ is good – plastic straws/plastic anything is all the hype but it is not all we have to look at just the tip – We need to look 20 years down the road – besides the impact of having recyclables go to landfill, MA is closing 2 landfills – we bury about 1 million pounds in NH every year

See article – boxed areas are highlighted

Encourages study committee

Rep Pearl – we stopped recycling glass – no market – what is going to happen with glass – it is back – 2 outlets for glass – shipping clean glass to Montreal – glass is worst thing you can put into a single stream system – Can use crushed glass for aggregate

Rep Aaron – it's the trucking fees – what can help with trucking fees? At same time recycling markets were collapsing – the real costs of trucking fees became apparent – if you have noncontaminated material – the best bet would be to put 2 towns together to mitigate trucking fees

–  
Rep Murray – frustration – changes in recycling – she is concerned we are going to disincentivize people

It would be nice if there was one national standard –

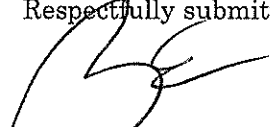
On a Nat'l call regarding batteries – just like electronic waste – in state of VT – no charge to bring in computers – they are getting 5cents per #

Rep Bixby – you have a vast knowledge of the subject; would you be willing to come in when we have the study committee? - Absolutely

**Rick Belanger from Epsom** – the glass we have in the state works but not the way it should – a town can use it however they want – but different regulations for private sector – ground glass can be used as an aggregate – the same with all recyclables it all has to be clean – biggest thing is to clean recyclables – His idea is to have 6 different satellites – DES is having trouble getting good clean sand for septic system – He thinks plastic needs to get shipped overseas due to our hourly wages – cardboard will always have a place to go - \$160/ton in tipping fees – there is going to be a lot of money made around \$100/\$120 – the US citizen are the smartest people in the world and we know how to make a buck – we have the basics setup in the state except in the Tamworth/Ossipee area where there needs to be a landfill – What about trash to energy facilities – we should get BTU's out of trash, there are incredible scrubbers out there

**Cordell Johnson – NHMA** – in strong support of this bill

Respectfully submitted,



Rep. Barbara Comtois  
Clerk



HB 617 – Establishing a committee to study recycling streams in NH

1:48 pm

Rep Ebel – study NH recycling streams – plastic is just the tip of iceberg – Solid Waste – the need for study is obvious – she is more alarmed about recycling – passed out articles – some towns stopped recycling – problem isn't just with plastic

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Rep Turcotte – very pleased when asked to co-sponsor bill – he runs transfer station in Allenstown – we have a company that takes care of everything – 10 yrs. ago switched over to recycling – company takes away recycling free – anyone who want to throw garbage must pay \$70 per #

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Cordell Johnson – NHMA – in strong support of this bill







# Testimony



The State of New Hampshire  
**Department of Environmental Services**



**Robert R. Scott, Commissioner**

January 29, 2019

The Honorable Amanda Gourgue  
Chair, House Environment and Agriculture Committee  
Legislative Office Building, Room 303  
Concord, NH 03301

**RE: HB 617, AN ACT Establishing a Committee to Study Recycling Streams in New Hampshire**

Dear Chair Gourgue and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 617. This bill would establish a committee to study the challenges currently facing recycling programs in New Hampshire. The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) supports this bill.

Recent changes in the global recycling market since 2017 have affected recycling programs in cities and towns across the country. In some cases, these market conditions have made it difficult for New Hampshire municipalities to find viable recycling outlets for certain materials, such as mixed paper or glass. At the same time, many municipalities have seen drastic cost increases related to management of recyclables. Although NHDES does not actively track recycling markets, we are anecdotally aware that some municipalities are currently paying more per ton to recycle than what it costs them to send trash to a landfill. This is concerning because it creates an economic disincentive for communities to continue recycling. In fact, media reporting has revealed that because of rising costs, some towns have decided to stop recycling certain items or temporarily discontinue curbside recycling services, ultimately making it more difficult for residents to divert recyclables from disposal.

A joint committee established by HB 617 would provide an opportunity for further exploration of these developments and what might be done to make recycling systems in New Hampshire more resilient over the long term. NHDES fully supports this initiative, and should a committee be formed, we would be pleased to assist its efforts as deemed appropriate.

[www.des.nh.gov](http://www.des.nh.gov)

29 Hazen Drive • PO Box 95 • Concord, NH 03302-0095  
(603) 271-3503 • Fax: 271-2867 TDD Access: Relay NH 1-800-735-2964

The Honorable Amanda Gourgue  
Chair, House Environment and Agriculture Committee  
January 29, 2019  
Page 2

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on HB 617. Should you have further questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact either Michael Nork, Environmental Analyst ([Michael.nork@des.nh.gov](mailto:Michael.nork@des.nh.gov), 271-2936) or Todd Moore, Solid Waste Management Bureau Administrator ([Todd.Moore@des.nh.gov](mailto:Todd.Moore@des.nh.gov), 271-6467).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert R. Scott". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Robert R. Scott  
Commissioner

cc: Sponsors of HB 617: Representatives Ebel, Turcotte, Carson, Tucker, O'Conner, Malloy; Senators Ward, Watters, Fuller Clark

# Now that you've gotten used to recycling, get used to doing it less

By [Barbara O'Brien](#) | Published 6:00 a.m. January 28, 2019 | Updated 8 hours ago

It took decades to convince Americans to throw paper, tin cans, glass jars and plastic milk jugs into the recycling bin instead of the garbage.

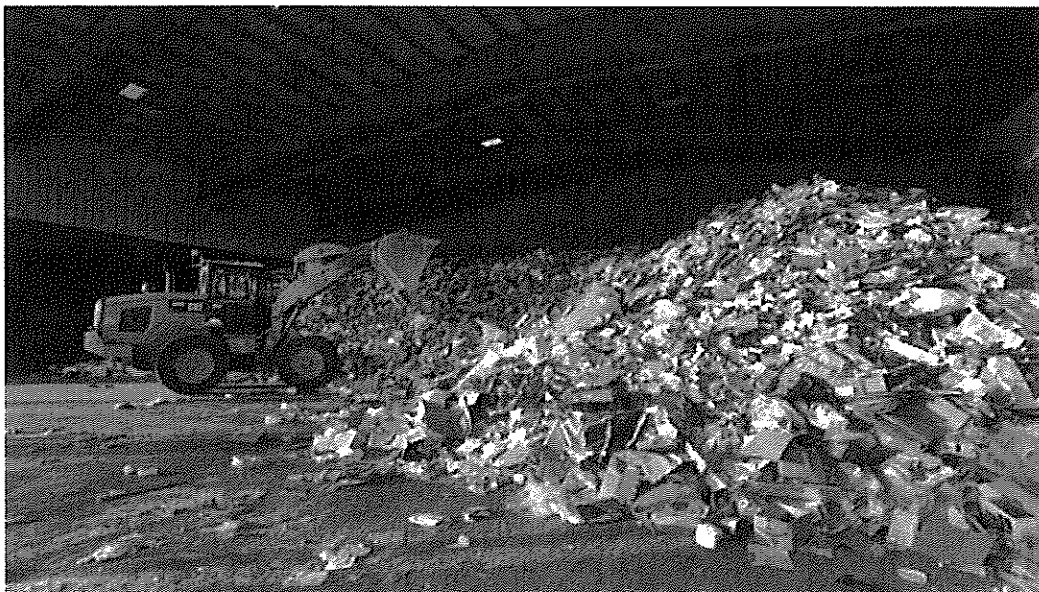
And now, some of those recyclables are ending up in the landfill.

Recycling is not going away, but because of a shift in the worldwide market, the system is undergoing changes that will dictate everything from what we can recycle to how often we can do it to how much it will cost.

And this time, we're not going to get decades to adjust.

The changes can be seen as area communities are budgeting for new recycling contracts.

- West Seneca planned for a \$40,000 increase in its new recycling contract, but the cost could be more than \$1 million to continue weekly pickup.
- Wheatfield saw a price increase of 17 percent, mostly due to recycling.
- Recycling cost Amherst \$153,000 last year, compared with two years earlier when it brought in nearly \$300,000.



### A look inside a recycling operation

China used to take most of the recycled materials collected in the United States for processing. But in 2018, it stopped accepting recyclables unless they had a low rate of contamination. That left out most of the recyclables Americans put at the curb, leaving materials recovery companies looking for other markets. Before China changed the game, the market had all but disappeared locally for some items, like colored glass.

"This is a big shock to the economics of recycling. It came out of nowhere, basically," said Andy Goldstein, recycling coordinator for Erie County, who added that municipalities are feeling it. "A year and a half ago they were getting a check. This year they're paying."

This is a lesson in supply and demand.

"You can also only recycle as much as it is economically feasible and sound to do," said Fenna Mandolang, operations manager of Buffalo Recycling Enterprise, a materials recovery facility in South Buffalo.

While Buffalo Recycling Enterprise did not send its plastic to China, it is feeling the pinch because California is now selling plastics to markets on the east coast, lowering the price, she said. The company also has had to find other markets for the paper it used to ship to China.



Bales of aluminum cans that have started the recycling process. (Sharon Cantillon/Buffalo News)

### **Some items can't be recycled**

It has taken towns and cities dozens of years to get people to recycle. "Single stream" recycling increased participation, because plastic, metal and paper are collected in the same bin or tote.

"Over the years our people diligently have been putting this material into recycling bins," Amherst Highway Superintendent Patrick G. Lucey said.

But he discovered that not everything in the bins can be easily recycled.

"We found out colored glass has not been recycled in this area for many, many years," he said.

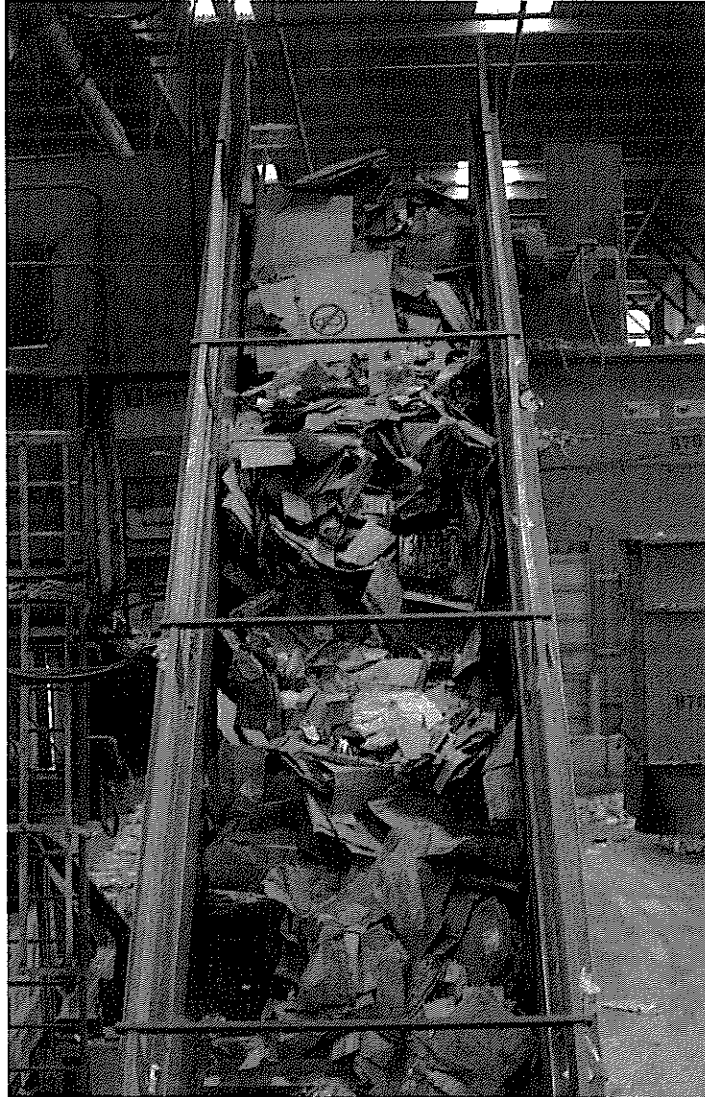
That's because it's difficult to filter out all the contaminants from other recyclables that glass comes in contact with in the recycling bin, Mandolang said. Glass also wears down the machinery, getting into gears and cutting conveyor belts, she said. It costs Amherst \$83 for every ton of recyclables that is processed, but \$35 a ton for solid waste that goes straight to the landfill, Lucey said. The math didn't make sense.

"We're suggesting that people don't recycle colored glass at this time," Lucey said.

He is hopeful the town will find a market for colored glass in the near future, but the glass probably would have to be dropped off at different locations instead of being picked up, he said. The town also is limiting plastics to those with the numbers 1 and 2 on the bottom, which are in more demand than other plastics. It is not worth it to recycle the others anymore, he said.

"At the end of the day they just get landfilled anyway," Lucey said. "We're trying to get as much un-recyclable material out of our totes."

The town also is encouraging residents to clean and rinse out plastic containers to cut down on contamination, and to keep plastic bags out of the recycling tote. The bags get wrapped around the sorting equipment, slowing down the sorting process, according to Mandolang.



Cardboard is sent up the chute to the baler at Buffalo Recycling Enterprise. (Sharon Cantillon/Buffalo News)

That doesn't mean they need to be thrown in the garbage. Some grocery stores recycle plastic bags, and a West Seneca church ministry makes sleeping mats for the homeless out of plastic bags.

Cities and towns across the country are affected, from Hawaii to Maine, according to the New York Times. Some communities are refusing to accept some items, while costs are going up all over.

One of them, Franklin, N.H., is throwing all its recyclables in with the garbage because instead of getting paid for recycling, it has to pay \$129 a ton, according to *Governing the States and Localities* magazine. Hannibal, Mo., stopped taking plastic and some communities in Pennsylvania don't accept glass, according to the *Washington Post*.



The move by China forced a hard look at the industry that had once been seen as a revenue stream for municipalities. There is a move to shift contracts to a risk and reward basis.

"We're providing a service and there's a cost to that service. We also have material that we're selling, but that's a risk and reward that we're going to share," Mandolang said.

When the market is stronger, both benefit, and when it is weaker, it shifts into a charge for the customer. That's why the Amherst town worked with Modern Disposal Corp, which picks up the recycling materials, to revise its recycling brochure for residents to focus on items for which there is a strong market.

If there's a glut on the market, the price goes down, and in many cases, recycling facilities have to pay to have the material taken to recycle, said Goldstein. Metal and cardboard are still bringing in money, he said.

### **No more 'wish-cycling'**

Niagara County's director of the Division of Environmental/Solid Waste said there needs to be an end to "wish-cycling."

"Just because you want it to be recyclable, doesn't mean it is," Dawn M. Timm said.

She said many plastics, such as plastic bags, single-use or lightweight plastic containers and toys, foam and packaging film cannot be recycled. Recycling needs to be simplified back to paper, some plastic, metal and aluminum, she said.

Timm said little attention was paid to the nonrecyclable materials put in recycle bins when single stream became popular.

"This material suddenly became relevant when China didn't want it anymore and the value of recyclables wasn't offsetting increased processing fees," she said. "Nothing grabs attention like a cost increase."

It certainly grabbed West Seneca's attention.

### **Grappling with increased cost**

West Seneca got a shock when it looked at bids for recycling. Continuing weekly pickup would cost about \$400,000 more than biweekly pickup. And that translates to a 3 to 4 percent increase in taxes, Councilman Gene Hart said.

"I don't see how we can go weekly, I just don't see it," he said. "It's cheaper to put it in the garbage right now."

Lancaster budgeted \$129,000 more for solid waste disposal and recycling this year, although different factors account for it, said Supervisor Johanna M. Coleman.

"We found that there are changes to the commodities market that exist today that didn't exist previously," she said.

The town will have a better idea of how much recycling is costing it as it works under the new contract, she said.

New Yorkers have recycled more than 320 million tons since recycling was mandated in 1992, according to the state Department of Environmental Conservation. And it's the third part of the reduce, reuse and recycle triangle.

"Recycling is taking something old and making something new. We can take what's old all we want here. If no one's making something new from it, then you don't complete the cycle,"



[www.nhthebeautiful.org](http://www.nhthebeautiful.org)

**Administrative Offices**

2101 Dover Road  
Epsom, NH 03234  
888-784-4442

**Corporate Offices**

John M Dumais, Chairman  
110 Stark Street  
Manchester, NH 03101  
603-669-9333

Testimony Regarding HB 617  
An Act Establishing a Committee to Study Recycling Streams  
House Environment and Agriculture, Room 303  
Tuesday, January 29, 2019

Good afternoon Madame Chair and members of the Committee. For the record, my name is John Dumais. I am the President and CEO of the New Hampshire Grocers Association. In addition, I am also the Chairman of New Hampshire the Beautiful. This non-profit organization is the collaborative effort of three New Hampshire based food and beverage associations; the Beer Distributors Association of NH; the NH Beverage Association (Soft Drinks); and the New Hampshire Grocers Association.

New Hampshire the Beautiful (NHtB) has a proud and substantial history of environmental accomplishments for the past 35 years. In that time, this organization has contributed over \$2 Million in incentives to pick up roadside litter, reduce solid waste, minimize landfill and 'tipping fee' costs, encourage recycling through educating the public (and in particular students). This has been accomplished through the implementation of several initiatives. Primary among them is our attempt to financially support Transfer Stations in improving all of their equipment and signage needs. Every community in the State is encouraged to annually apply for environmental assistance grants from NHtB. While these are the primary activities of NHtB, many conceptual pilot projects have also been implemented over the years.

NHtB supports the intent of HB 617. Our basic mission is to provide information and increase awareness of the most efficient and economically viable recycling programs, for communities, citizens and businesses. While we would encourage the consideration of a Commission, for the broader involvement of all stakeholders, we are confident this proposed Committee will take the time necessary to fully explore all options.

Currently several bills have been introduced this Session to address the recycling stream issues this state, just as the entire nation is equally facing. We believe it is appropriate to fully understand the benefits and challenges of recycling, prior to the implementation of any legislation. NHtB looks forward to assisting with HB 617's study. In fact, the three associations of NHtB are encouraging the participants of this committee to visit our member's facility, at their convenience to better understand the recycling challenges and innovations currently being implemented by the private sector, which ultimately benefits the state, its citizens, tourism, and commerce.



# See What New Hampshire the Beautiful

## Did for New Hampshire in 2018!

In just one year, New Hampshire the Beautiful has provided an enormous amount of support for recycling and anti-litter programs by:



**Administrative Office:**

2101 Dover Rd, Epsom, NH 03234  
T: 603-736-4401 | F: 603-736-4402  
E: [nhtb@nrra.net](mailto:nhtb@nrra.net)  
[www.nhthebeautiful.org](http://www.nhthebeautiful.org)

 **\$13,919**

Granting **\$13,919.70** worth of **recycling signs** to NH transfer stations and schools

 **72,900**

Donating **72,900 blue bags** for litter pick up to communities & NH Departments of Transportation to assist in keeping NH roads and community areas litter-free

 **490**

Subsidizing the cost of **490 recycling bins** and **ClearStream recycling containers** for schools and communities throughout the state

 **\$46,986**

Awarding over **\$46,986 in recycling grants** to **24 NH municipalities** to help increase the efficiency of their recycling programs

 Awarded a NH School with a **\$500 School Recycling Innovation Grant** to help improve their school recycling program.

Providing over **\$35,000** in funding to the **NRRA School Recycling CLUB** to provide recycling education to our future generations of recyclers



**Funded and Presented an Environmental Stewardship Award** at NRRA's Annual Conference to recognize and reward a dedicated transfer facility professional who goes above and beyond their facility recycling responsibilities and engages their entire community in better recycling for a better future.

**Maintained two NEW RecycleMobiles** to be used by communities and/or Schools throughout the year for various public events.



NH the Beautiful, Inc. (NHtB) is a private non-profit charitable trust founded in 1983 and support by the soft drink, malt beverage, and grocery industries of New Hampshire. By offering municipal recycling grants, signs, anti-litter programs, and technical assistance to recycling programs, NHtB is a unique organization that represents a voluntarily-funded alternative to expensive legislation intended to achieve the same end results. New Hampshire the Beautiful also provides support to the NRRA School Recycling CLUB. NRRA administers the programs for NH the Beautiful ([www.nhthebeautiful.org](http://www.nhthebeautiful.org)) and has since 2006.

# After Franklin ends recycling, residents sort out what it all means

By LEAH WILLINGHAM  
Monitor staff

Tuesday, July 31, 2018

Kristan Skora was disappointed when she heard the city of Franklin was no longer recycling, but she said the decision isn't going to change the way she organizes waste.

Skora said she plans to continue separating her recycling from her trash. Her family uses the city's green and gray bins to organize each – and at this point, they're used to doing it.

"There might be people who don't care, and say, 'We'll just throw it all out.' But it's not as healthy for the environment," Skora said. "We want to stay in the mindset that recycling is the right thing to do."

The city announced this month that both trash and recycling barrels will be picked up from one refuse vehicle and incinerated at the Wheelabrator trash-to-energy incinerator in Concord, citing rising costs for "single-stream" recycling disposal.

The cost of single-stream recycling has increased worldwide as companies in China, for years the world's biggest market for single-stream recyclables, announced they would no longer accept the waste because it contains too much unacceptable material, such as food-tainted pizza boxes or types of plastic that can't be recycled.

This has left cities and towns to cut back on recycling because of costs. Several have stopped accepting glass in single-stream systems, because it can break and contaminate the entire recycling stream, while others have cracked down on people putting non-recyclable material in their bins, such as a push by Concord to remind people not to recycle plastic bags, which snarl the sorting machinery.

In Franklin, a city that scrambled this month to put together a budget after an almost \$1 million shortfall in school funding, the cost has meant discontinuing the program.

Resident F at Palm said the decision was especially discouraging because the push to recycle more in Franklin seemed to be picking up in recent years.

## RELATED STORIES

In Franklin, trash and recyclables are sent to the incinerator together (/franklin-recycling-trash-nh-19057126)

"I think it's too bad," said Palm, who owns a pawn shop in downtown Franklin. "You don't think much about where your trash and recycling is going because you assume good things are being done to it."

The city has asked that residents continue to sort their waste. That way, if the program is ever reinstated, it will be a smooth transition.

"I know it's a pain for residents to do it, but it would be harder for people to get out of the habit and then back in the habit again," City Manager Judie Milner said.

Franklin residents who want to continue recycling can take their material to the town transfer station, something currently done by about 5 percent of city residents, although they'll have to sort it into glass, plastic, cardboard, paper and other categories, Milner said.

Roland Day, who was enjoying an ice cream outside Central Sweets Candy Store on Tuesday afternoon, said he didn't think residents were going to rush to recycle at the transfer station.

"There's no money in this town," Day said. "People aren't going to want to put in the work to take that extra step."

*(David Brooks contributed to this report. Leah Willingham can be reached at 369-3322, lwillingham@cmonitor.com or on Twitter @LeahMWillingham.)*

### **Related stories**

In Franklin, trash and recyclables are sent to the incinerator together (/franklin-recycling-trash-nh-19057126)

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# A plastic problem: Towns ask residents to separate what's recyclable, what's not

By DAVID BROOKS

Monitor staff

Thursday, January 17, 2019

When it comes to the reason behind a new requirement for people to separate the plastics they bring to the four-town B.C.E.P. transfer station, numbers tell the story.

"I can get maybe 3½ to 5 cents a pound" for most types of plastic if they can be sold at all, said facility administrator Lisa Stevens, whereas for the best type of plastic, known as numbers 1 and 2, "I can get 29 to 42 cents a pound."

Want more numbers from the Pittsfield facility, which also takes trash from Chichester, Epsom and Barnstead? How about these:

In 2010, the facility sold 79 tons of plastic. Last year, it sold only half as much, 42 tons, even though the amount of plastic being brought to the transfer station keeps increasing.

"Everything is plastic now. Everything goes in a Ziploc bag. And who uses a wooden toilet seat any more? They're all plastic. And water – they want you to have a water bottle and they're all plastic," Stevens said.

With less plastic being sold, more is being shoved into landfills. The facility doesn't measure how much plastic gets trashed, but here's an indication: In 2010, the facility landfilled a total of 2,583 tons of waste. In 2018, it sent 14 percent more: 2,945 tons.

B.C.E.P. is not alone in this situation. All dumps and transfer stations are struggling with the collapse of most markets for recyclable material, mostly caused by China's clampdown.

Back in 2010, China would buy almost anything to use as raw material in manufacturing. Back then, Stevens said, she could sell virtually every bit of plastic that residents dropped off, even large, bulky "rigid plastic" items like chairs, buckets and toys.

But China has gotten much, much pickier. Today, bales of plastic going to market have to be pristine, consisting only of types 1 and 2 plastic such as water bottles or milk bottles, if there's any hope of selling them. All the other types of plastic – there are seven of them –

that are tossed in B.C.E.P.'s recycling bin has to be separated out by staff and sent to the landfill.

That's why the station is changing its recycling system. Starting next, people will be asked to separate out the plastic themselves. They'll separate sellable plastic into one of three bins and toss out the rest.

One bin will take Type 1 plastic, known as PET, which is used in soda bottles; one will take Type 2 plastic known as HDPE, best known for milk jugs; and one will take HDPE that has been dyed a color.

Everything else, from cling wrap to bottle caps to PVC piping, goes in the trash.

"If I had unlimited storage and I could hold it until the market comes back, or somebody develops technology for some new use of it, then I would," Stevens said. "But we don't."

The landfill was going to hold an open house on Monday to discuss the situation but the snowstorm and expected single-digit temperatures led Stevens to postpone it.

As for a broader response to the problem, that could require building and developing more plastic recycling facilities in the U.S., Stevens said. But the real solution is harder: Americans need to use less and waste less.

"We've been a lazy country. We're all about convenience and immediacy; we throw it away and don't think about it again," she said. "We've got to wake up."

(David Brooks can be reached at 369-3313, [dbrooks@cmonitor.com](mailto:dbrooks@cmonitor.com) or on Twitter @GraniteGeek.)



# Recycling Breaks Down: US Struggles to Keep Plastic From the Dump

## China is turning away material it had been taking

By Noreen O'Donnell

Published Aug 13, 2018 at 1:36 PM | Updated at 4:20 PM EDT on Aug 13, 2018

China has implemented a new recycling policy called National Sword, halting all imports of recycled materials. The U.S. was sending about 40 percent of its recycled goods to china before the policy's implementation which means there is a lot of recycled material with nowhere to go. See how the policy is affecting local recycling centers. (Published Wednesday, Dec. 19, 2018)

### What to Know

- **China is cleaning up its environment and no longer importing recycled plastics, paper and other items**
- **The restrictions have upended recycling markets as communities search for somewhere to send discarded plastic bottles and other items**
- **Environmentalists hope the ban will spur more innovation and less use of disposable products**

Feeling pleased that your conscientious recycling is helping to save the environment? Not so fast. Your yogurt container or takeout clamshell might end up in a dump thanks to a ban on discarded items that the United States had been sending to China for processing.

This year, China followed through with its threat to prohibit the import of U.S. plastics, mixed paper and other materials that it says were turning the country into the world's garbage dump. The repercussions from the new policy have been quick and nowhere close to sorted out in communities across the U.S.

Sacramento, California, cut back on which plastics it will pick up curbside, and will send items like egg cartons, medicine bottles and some yogurt containers to landfills instead.

San Diego's recycling program brought in \$4 million in revenue last year. Recycling could now cost the city \$1.1 million.

In New Jersey, Sunil Bagaria is retooling his company, moving from one that exported to China to one that will do the work of recycling in the U.S.

"What we are trying to achieve is recycling at source," said Bagaria, president and co-founder with his brother of GDB International, a recycling and sustainability company based in New Brunswick. "That means the community that produces the plastic waste will be responsible for the recycling."

But until that happens, recycling markets are in turmoil. China had been taking half of the world's paper and plastic when it called a halt to the imports, tightening the contamination limit to 0.5 percent for most imports. The material it used to accept was too dirty, it said.

## Recycling Troubles: Companies Struggle With New Tariffs

The problems are "piling up" for San Francisco Bay Area recycling and trash collection companies trying to comply with California's strict standards. Sam Brock reports.

(Published Tuesday, Aug. 14, 2018)

Now no one knows where that material will go instead. While the developed world looks for new markets for its scrap, environmentalists warn that we must curb our addiction to disposable items, from plastic cups to food containers and other items that we use once and throw away.

"The human footprint on the planet and here in the United States is still too large," said Benjamin Orlove, a director at Columbia University's Center for Research on Environmental Decisions and a faculty member of its Earth Institute.

### **CHINA TACKLES POLLUTION**

Here's how we got to this point: For decades, the U.S., rather than recycling its own material, had been sorting it, baling it and shipping it to China, where it became raw materials for new goods. But then China began warning that as part of its efforts to tackle its environmental pollution, it would impose stricter demands on scrap imports. China launched Green Fences in 2013 to enforce regulations on the quality of the imports, and announced its latest policy, National Sword, last year. It told the World Trade Organization that it needed to protect China's environment and the health of its people.

Dirty or hazardous waste mixed in with raw materials had "polluted China's environment seriously," the WTO filing said.

China's 40 years of economic growth has pushed the country's carbon dioxide emissions to the highest in the world, and left China dealing with terrible smog and water and other pollution. Its economy now is the second largest of all nations, about two-thirds of the U.S. output last year. China has less need for imported scrap material, though some economists question whether fewer recyclables could result in a slowdown. At the same time China banned imported trash, it announced plans to step up enforcement of recycling within the country.

"They have a mountain of plastic scrap of their own so they want to first solve their own problem before importing plastic scrap from overseas," Bagaria said. The takeaway for him was that China's shutoff means other countries have to take responsibility for recycling at source.

### **LOW RECYCLING RATE**

The U.S. has a long way to go. Of the 258 million tons of waste that Americans generated in 2014 more than 89 million tons were recycled and composted for a recycling rate of 34.6 percent, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

China had been taking about 40 percent of U.S. paper, plastics and other recyclables but after the new restrictions began going into effect, the numbers plummeted. Recycled plastics from the U.S. to China dropped by 92 percent over the first five months of the year. All types of exported scrap, from plastics and paper to aluminum, copper and stainless steel, fell 36 percent.

The Chinese market was greater than the next 15 markets combined, leaving the U.S. with little in the way of backup. Thousands of tons of material that would have been recycled are now going into landfills

instead. Some municipalities have stopped collecting items that used to be recycled and others have been stockpiling them.

"No other market can possibly take in that much volume and they gave us so little time for transition that the industry is still having to react," said Adina Renee Adler, a senior director at the Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries. "So unfortunately we have seen some materials go to landfill, which is no good."

California is especially dependent on China. It had been exporting about a third of all recyclable material that it generated, 62 percent of that to China.

The new ban is playing out by the numbers. Sacramento continues to take plastics marked with codes one through three — PET or polyethylene terephthalate which is used for soft drink bottles and peanut butter jars; HDPE or high density polyethylene, which is used for milk jugs, butter tubs and detergent bottles; and V or polyvinyl chloride, which is used in shampoo bottles. But it is no longer accepting plastics four through seven, which typically are found in grocery bags, many yogurt containers, bottle caps, meat trays and other items.

Sacramento asked its Houston-based waste and recycling hauler, Waste Management, to indicate which items should no longer be included in its recycling collection before changing its recycling criteria.

Waste Management spokesperson Janette Micelli said there is no "system-wide restrictions on materials" and it makes sure customers understand what the markets will pay for recyclables being collected. The company has shifted material to alternative markets, some domestically, some elsewhere.

"While we've been shipping into China for years, we also have opened up market in other parts of Southeast Asia, India, South America and Europe," said Brent Bell, a Waste Management vice president for recycling. "And so when the Chinese starting restricting the imports we quickly shifted that material to some of these alternative markets."

San Diego historically had exported 80 percent of its curbside material, 60 percent to China, according to the city's Environmental Services Department. The percentage dropped to 24 percent in the first quarter of 2018.

Its recycling processing contractors in May proposed suspending all revenue payments to the city — which stood at \$4 million in the last fiscal year. Instead it would assess the city a \$1.1 million annual cost. The loss of the China market and low oil prices together have tanked the value of plastic.

The department is working to amend the contract to adjust for the effects of China's National Sword Policy.

#### **CATALYST FOR THE INDUSTRY**

Back in New Jersey, Bagaria's company had been baling recyclables for shipment to China, where the material was sorted by hand. It now is investing in machinery to do the recycling in the U.S. Two facilities in New Jersey are up and running; the others are to be outfitted by the end of August. They will be able to clean the recyclables, grind them up and convert them into small pellets that can serve as raw material for new products.

"There is a lot to be still done, but the China ban was almost like a catalyst in that direction," he said. "It helped the industry. Now we don't have a choice."

As disruptive as the ban is, experts hope the upheaval will spur even more innovation. Marian Chertow, an associate professor at the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies and director of the program on solid waste policy, noted that in 2008 China passed a law promoting a circular economy. The idea is you

make a product with material you know can be recycled rather than make a product and then figure out how to recycle it.

China's move to ban recyclables now is an enormous opportunity for the U.S. to see value in its own scrap, Chertow said. That said, change will not be easy, nor will it be quick, she and others said. Many municipalities invested heavily in single stream recycling, in which everything is put into one recycling box and separated later, a decision that may have contributed to poorly separated items.

"When single-stream became popular some years ago, I was dismayed, even aghast," Richard Holden Bole, the owner of Recycle Midwest in Cleveland, wrote in *Recycling Today* last year. "Treating recyclables the same way you treat the trash – in a trash truck – seemed terrible to me. I knew it would result in contamination and sorting difficulty of all the materials. Sure enough, for years many of the materials coming out of single-stream plants have been poorly sorted."

Bole says the best solution going forward would be to return to separating recyclables before they are picked up, as some communities still do: a pile of flattened cardboard preferably tied with string, mingled bottles and cans and finally mixed paper.

"It's a true crisis," he said. "It was poorly thought out to begin with."

### **RECYCLING WILL SURVIVE**

The industry is facing a massive retooling, that in the end will be for the better, said National Recycling Coalition executive director Marjorie Griek. Recycling will survive the setback, though individuals have few choices at the moment, she said.

"It's too entrenched in society and too many people understand the importance of recycling both for the environment and for the economy," she said.

Eric Goldstein, a senior attorney at the Natural Resources Defense Council and its environmental director for New York City, said that recyclables are likely to be stockpiled in the short term until new markets are found. The key is to focus on the long term. Recyclables are like all commodities — whether corn or oil or bitcoin — and their markets fluctuate. New uses are being found for typically hard to recycle items, recycled glass in concrete, for example. Manufacturers must be brought into the loop so that the producers of products or packaging share the responsibility of recycling them, he said.

Studies show that recycling and composting trash produce more jobs per ton handled than does bringing it to landfills or incinerators. A study by the Institute for Local Self-Reliance found that the removal of 10,000 tons of solid waste creates six jobs versus as many as 36 if that waste were recycled instead.

"It's very unlikely that America's cities and towns are going to abandon recycling, which makes so much sense both from an environmental standpoint and a climate change standpoint and a jobs production standpoint," Goldstein said.

Orlove, of Columbia University's Earth Institute, notes that recycling is not an end to itself but a way to address an excess use of resources and to curb climate change.

With a recycling rate of only about 34 percent, the U.S. has not progressed fast enough, he said.

### **NEW TECHNOLOGIES EMERGE**

New practices and technologies are emerging. Ikea will start using biodegradable mushroom-based packaging that can decompose in a couple of weeks and which Dell is already cushioning its computers with. Clothing designer Eileen Fisher and Fabscrap, a non-profit in New York City, are reusing fabric, Terracycle's Zero Waste Box provides 120 different boxes to segregate waste better,

and Enerkem uses municipal waste to manufacture biofuel. Apple has a robot that dismantles cell phones, while DSM-Niaga, a technology and chemical company based in the Netherlands, recycles carpets.

At the Burbank Recycling Center in Burbank, California, the coordinator, Kreigh Hampel, said the U.S. had lost control of its consumption. Looking forward, the situation is very unstable, he said.

“It’s a big ask to change things very quickly in the United States about our consumption habits,” he said. “It’s a big ask to find other countries and other mills and processors to take the amount of waste that we generate in the U.S. every year and try to get it into re-use programs or recycling programs. So I wish I had a crystal ball to predict the future. And I just don’t.”

*Jeremy Berg contributed to this article.*

# Bill as Introduced

HB 617 - AS INTRODUCED

2019 SESSION

19-0675  
08/06

HOUSE BILL

**617**

AN ACT

establishing a committee to study recycling streams in New Hampshire.

SPONSORS:

Rep. Ebel, Merr. 5; Rep. Turcotte, Merr. 22; Rep. Carson, Merr. 7; Rep. Tucker, Coos 5; Rep. O'Connor, Rock. 6; Rep. Malloy, Rock. 23; Sen. Ward, Dist 8; Sen. Watters, Dist 4; Sen. Fuller Clark, Dist 21

COMMITTEE:

Environment and Agriculture

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ANALYSIS

This bill establishes a committee to study recycling streams in New Hampshire.

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Explanation:

Matter added to current law appears in *bold italics*.

Matter removed from current law appears [~~in brackets and struck through.~~]

Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

*In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Nineteen*

AN ACT                    establishing a committee to study recycling streams in New Hampshire.

*Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:*

1            1 Committee Established. There is established a committee to study recycling programs in  
2 New Hampshire.

3            2 Membership and Compensation.

4            I. The members of the committee shall be as follows:

5            (a) Three members of the house of representatives, appointed by the speaker of the  
6 house of representatives.

7            (b) One member of the senate, appointed by the president of the senate.

8            II. Members of the committee shall receive mileage at the legislative rate when attending to  
9 the duties of the committee.

10          3 Duties. The committee shall study:

11          I. The state of recycling programs in New Hampshire in light of changing market  
12 conditions.

13          II. Challenges faced by municipalities in running recycling programs.

14          III. Such other related issues as the committee deems necessary, including potential  
15 legislation.

16          4 Chairperson; Quorum. The members of the study committee shall elect a chairperson from  
17 among the members. The first meeting of the committee shall be called by the first-named house  
18 member. The first meeting of the committee shall be held within 45 days of the effective date of this  
19 section.

20          5 Report. The committee shall report its findings, any recommendations for proposed  
21 legislation, and recommendations for actions that can be taken by municipalities and the state to  
22 the speaker of the house of representatives, the president of the senate, the house clerk, the senate  
23 clerk, the governor, and the state library on or before November 1, 2019.

24          6 Effective Date. This act shall take effect upon its passage.