

Comments to Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and Municipal Review Committee (MRC) on proposed dirty Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) proposed for Hampden, Maine

- 1) There is an urgent need for a national debate, more than a local or regional one, on the future of Materials Recovery Facilities (MRF) in the United States and elsewhere. Otherwise, the general lack of information for local citizens, results in a process that relies too heavily on the recycling industry alone. The benefit of having the input of economists, sociologists, historians, behaviorists, bankers, engineers, etc. are many. The same is true for incineration, landfilling, and other post-consumer material management systems, See link:
<http://www.zeemaps.com/pub?group=131371&x=-95&y=40&z=13&nopdf=1&list=1>
- 2) Strongly recommend return to policy of free household presort labor, resembling former City of Bangor's program and New Brunswick, Canada's bottle return. Fail to see the benefits of energy consumed in running large plants world-wide, when we can rely on the free labor supplied by the citizenry to presort into curbside collection. It seems a preferred method, to supply monies and resources toward education and implementation for the general public and business on a grander scale such as Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sponsored media events for a national program, properly vetted, to a national audience.
- 3) Strongly object to the co-mingling of dirty post-consumer materials with clean ones and the resulting contamination which by some industry reports creates a net loss of up to 20% of materials handled. Also information needed on where these contaminated products end up, i.e. landfill, incinerator and the side-effects of these recipients such as air and water, and soil pollution. See link:
<http://upstreampolicy.org/recycling-reassessed-part-1-why-do-we-treat-our-recycling-as-garbage/>
- 4) From a sociological perspective, object to the direction of creating dull, depressing, and uninspiring jobs of the conveyor belt material-picking sort. There are likely numerous studies documenting such behaviors as alcoholism, depression, domestic abuse, etc., resulting from these types of jobs. Also a safety concern from handling broken glass and unwashed post-consumer materials. Lastly, as was quoted in *Municipal Solid Waste Magazine*, "dirty MRF's continue a culture of disposability v. a culture of sustainability.

Jay Dresser
Bangor, Maine 04401