

T-2.2

SWANA TECHNICAL POLICY

DEPOSIT SYSTEMS

I. POLICY

A variety of approaches to the use of deposit systems have been and are being utilized in North America. These systems have been used both as litter control and solid waste management initiatives. There is little doubt that as integrated municipal solid waste management systems (IMSWMS) are implemented, deposit systems will be considered as a part of those systems. The following SWANA policy on the use of deposit systems as a means of solid waste reduction and waste screening is established.

SWANA's position on deposit systems as a solid waste reduction and waste screening policy is as follows:

1. Solid waste deposit systems should be compatible with existing, or planned energy and materials recovery programs.
2. Solid waste deposit systems should be used as a management tool for a variety of materials in the MSW stream, particularly "special wastes", such as tires, white goods, batteries, waste oils, etc. Deposit systems established for the purpose of managing "special wastes", e.g. white goods, lead acid batteries, tires, certain materials within household hazardous wastes, waste oils, small quantities of hazardous wastes (unregulated), are probably better enacted at the state/provincial level.
3. Deposit system legislation should be enacted at the federal level, for such intents as diversion or reduction of toxic substances in products and for changes in materials use practices. In these instances, federal initiatives can be viewed as an advance disposal charges with the revenue being passed back to states, provinces and local government for implementation of integrated municipal solid waste management systems.
4. Solid waste deposit systems should be used as a means to enhance the management of solid waste materials, which contain toxic substances which when released, at certain concentrations, into the environment can present hazards to human health or the environment.
5. Solid waste deposit systems are one of many methods to be considered for reducing the amount of solid waste generated, and the amount that must be disposed.
6. Solid waste deposit systems should not be limited to just beverage containers.
7. Solid waste deposit systems should be used as a means to divert materials from the solid waste stream to other predetermined management options other than disposal.

8. The deposit levels of solid waste deposit systems should be sufficiently high to influence consumer and manufacturer's behavior regarding the amount of:
 - materials, such as toxic substances, used in the manufacture of products;
 - solid waste discarded;
 - toxic substance concentrations in products which become MSW; and
 - materials diverted to predetermined management options (other than disposal).
9. Solid waste deposit systems should not be used as a means to generate profits for MSWM or non-MSWM programs. Rather, deposit systems are a method to manage MSW and materials from the MSW stream. This is not to say however, that revenue from deposit systems should not be used to finance the costs of managing the diverted materials and for other MSWM initiatives.
10. Because of the complexity of the production and distribution of goods and products, deposit systems are more effective at the state, provincial or federal level. Federal legislation is the preferred method to standardize competition and provide a level playing field for all manufacturers. However, federal legislation should not limit the ability of the states and provinces to also impose certain controls to meet unique state or provincial needs.
11. Solid waste deposit systems should not be implemented in a manner that imposes a regressive tax, causes an increased expenditure of energy resources, or causes an increase in government expenditures.

II. DISCUSSION

Local governments are planning and implementing integrated municipal solid waste management systems (IMSWMS). Concern over diminishing resources, the need to increase and assure capacity, and protection of human health and the environment are the catalysts for initiating IMSWM. As local governments plan for IMSWM some combination of the four IMSWM methods: (landfilling [SLF], waste-to-energy [WTE], recycling [RCL], and waste reduction [WR]) must be utilized to deal with the MSW stream.

WR is defined, for the purposes of this policy, as a means to redirect specific solid waste items from the solid waste stream for one of the following reasons:

1. to remove and divert selected solid waste items to other predetermined management approaches;
2. to remove solid waste items from the solid waste stream for the purpose of reuse or recycling; and

3. to remove materials which contain toxic or prohibited substances which when released, at certain concentrations, into the environment can present hazards to human health or the environment, or other products, which hinder the safe operation of the IMSWMS.

Waste screening is defined as a process whereby a MSWM system establishes activities which provides an understanding of the materials being managed and assures that unwanted or banned materials have been diverted from the MSW stream; waste screening is a verification process which supports established procedures to ban or divert those materials.

Municipal solid waste management systems (MSWMS) are at the end of the materials production and use pipeline. MSWMS do not determine what products the public should buy, nor is it practical for them to do so. Local governments do not currently control, nor do they have the necessary authority, skills, or expertise to determine the material composition of products or design of those products. Further, local governments do not determine when these products become a waste; the user does. Consequently, while local government can encourage public efforts to generate less solid waste, local governments have limited capability to effect, in a measurable way, a significant reduction in the amount, or significant change in the character, of the solid waste that they have the responsibility to manage. Consequently, waste reduction initiatives by local government should be directed to efforts that improve the operation and safety of their MSWMS or improve reuse and recycling opportunities. Local government should look to state, provincial or federal government to lead the effort for waste reduction in the manufacturing sector.

Until recently, deposit systems have focused on beverage containers and have been viewed as either a litter reduction or recycling initiative. This is partly the result of the impression of some groups that a major contributor to litter is beverage containers, and that deposit initiatives will help reduce the litter problem. Deposit systems have not normally been viewed as a waste reduction or solid waste management practice.

Deposit systems should be considered in a broader context and utilized as a waste reduction initiative. As such, they could divert measurable quantities of materials, which would otherwise have to be managed in a MSWM system, to other materials management options. In the context of IMSWM, considering deposits on beverage containers only, is limiting. If implemented for beverage containers, deposits will only impact modestly on reducing the MSW stream. Due to their relative low percentage of total share of the MSW stream. Deposit systems on beverage containers have also been shown to create negative impacts on existing recycling systems. Therefore, in considering deposit systems on beverage containers, or other materials or products which may become solid waste, where recycling programs are in place, states, provinces and local governments need to be sensitive to the economic impact on existing recycling systems. In those instances where recycling systems are in place, those establishing deposit systems need to balance reduction or diversion needs against recycling demands.

Deposit systems have not routinely been considered as a means to reduce solid waste generation, or to divert certain discarded materials to other material management options. In the utilization of deposit systems as a WR initiative, any product with a deposit, which is returned into a materials management system, other than a MSWMS, results in less solid wastes to collect and be managed by local government. However, a deposit system on specific materials will require a system to

assure the proper management of the materials collected and distribution of deposits which are not refunded.

A deposit system can also be used to divert certain solid waste items, often called "special wastes", such as white goods, tires, lead acid batteries, etc. from the MSW stream to other management options. A deposit system can also be used to remove solid waste items containing toxic substances or hazardous materials.

Deposit systems, therefore, offer a means to meet government initiatives to encourage WR; to increase recycling opportunities; to divert materials to other management options; and to remove undesirable materials from the MSW stream. However, when deposit systems are being considered, their impact and compatibility with existing or planned materials and energy recovery programs must be a major factor in determining whether or not such systems should be implemented. In addition, deposit systems may burden retail and wholesale enterprises and may also result in windfall revenues to distributors, states and provinces for unclaimed deposits. A process for the distribution and utilization of these unclaimed deposits should be established when the deposit system is being established. Those unclaimed deposits should be distributed to fund other MSWM initiatives at the state, provincial and local government levels.

SWANA supports deposit systems that are directed at serving as a means to manage a variety of materials that may be in the MSWM stream, if not diverted before discarding. Such systems should be used to remove "special wastes", toxic materials and similar wastes for the purposes of other management methods. SWANA does not support deposit systems that target just beverage containers. Deposit systems should be viewed as a waste reduction and waste screening management tool.

Approved by the Executive Committee on July 31, 1993.

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International Secretary

Dated June 13, 1994