

# KENTUCKY SOLID WASTE PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT REPORT

Prepared By

**DEPARTMENT FOR  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
PROTECTION**

**DIVISION OF WASTE  
MANAGEMENT**



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Effective solid waste management is a critical component of public health protection, environmental stewardship, and sustainable planning. The Kentucky Statewide Solid Waste Reduction and Management Plan Report outlines a comprehensive framework for the sustainable management of solid waste within the Commonwealth of Kentucky. The newest edition of the Kentucky Statewide Solid Waste Reduction and Management Plan Report is expected to be completed in 2026. As population growth, urban development, and consumption patterns continue to drive increases in waste generation, it is essential to implement a forward-thinking integrated approach to waste management that protects human health, conserves natural resources and supports environmental resilience.

The purpose of the FY25 Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP) Report is to evaluate current solid waste management practices, waste generation trends, infrastructure capacity, diversion rates, and recommendations for improving strategies. It identifies key challenges and opportunities in areas such as waste reduction, recycling, landfill optimization, and public education. The report also documents key accomplishments and any regulatory or policy developments that have occurred in recent years.

The overarching goals of the plan are to:

- Minimize waste generation through source reduction and reuse;
- Maximize diversion through recycling and composting;
- Ensure safe, efficient, and environmentally sound disposal of solid waste;
- Promote community engagement and interagency coordination; and
- Build adaptive capacity to address future waste management needs.

The FY25 Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP) Report serves as a tool for decision-makers, stakeholders, and the public to assess and support the transition toward a more sustainable and circular waste management system.

## LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS

Recent legislative sessions have seen multiple bills passed into law amending portions of the Kentucky Revised Statutes that authorize the Division of Waste Management solid waste programs. Therefore, the Energy and Environment Cabinet was required to amend and promulgate administrative regulations.

The 2023 Session of the General Assembly produced House Bill 4, authorizing the Energy and Environment Cabinet to promulgate administrative regulations to monitor and regulate merchant electric generating facilities, including bonding and decommissioning. While these generating facilities can range from wind turbines to battery storage, the primary focus is solar. As these facilities begin to generate electricity, the Energy and Environment Cabinet will coordinate the transition of regulatory oversight with the Kentucky Electric Generation and Transmission Siting Board. The Division of Waste Management promulgated administrative regulations in 401 KAR Chapter 103 to establish monitoring and enforcement requirements for the Energy and Environment Cabinet's obligations established in KRS 278.710. The General Assembly also passed Senate Bill 213 establishing KRS 224.50-765 which required the Energy and Environment Cabinet to promulgate new administrative regulations to regulate biosolids from wastewater treatment at a publicly owned treatment works in conformity with and no more stringent than federal standards. Pursuant to KRS 224.50-765, biosolids are defined as "nutrient-rich, organic, residual material that results from the treatment of domestic sewage or sewage sludge in a treatment facility and can be recycled and applied as a fertilizer to improve and maintain productive soils." The Cabinet amended eleven (11) regulations and promulgated one new administrative regulation within 401 KAR Chapter 45 relating to the land application of biosolids.

The 2024 Session saw House Bill 478 amend KRS 224.40-120 to allow an off-site construction or demolition waste disposal permittee to request an increase in the size of the permitted area to no more than two acres total if the applicant is compliant and meets permit requirements for the current and newly permitted areas, including posting an additional bond for the newly permitted area. In response, the Division of Waste Management amended 401 KAR 47:110 and 48:320 to ensure the regulatory standards for construction and/or demolition debris landfills were in conformance with the amended statute.

The 2025 Session of the General Assembly produced Senate Resolution 238, urging the Energy and Environment Cabinet to explore and implement strategies to remove waste tires from Kentucky's streams and waterways. In collaboration with the Division of Water, the Division of Waste Management is actively exploring strategies to address the removal of waste tires from waterways. The Division of Waste Management will submit a report to the Legislative Research Commission detailing findings, strategies, and legislative recommendations by December 1, 2025.

Administrative regulations related to the Division of Waste Management are listed on the Legislative Research Commission (LRC) website at <https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/law/kar/titles/401/>.

## SOLID WASTE PERMITS AND REGISTRATIONS

Staff in the Solid Waste Branch are responsible for reviewing and processing permit applications, registrations, technical reports, groundwater data, and fees for various types of waste management and disposal facilities. The regulatory requirements for each type of facility vary depending on the waste. The administrative and technical requirements can be found in the Kentucky Revised Statutes Chapter 224 and Kentucky Administrative Regulations Title 401. Waste programs are divided into several broad categories, including:

- The solid waste program includes facilities that manage and/or accept disposal of household, commercial, and industrial waste.
- The special waste program is a subset of solid waste, as specifically defined by KRS 224.50-760, and includes wastewater and water treatment sludge, coal combustion residuals, or coal combustion by-products.

## SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL FACILITIES AND METRICS

Solid waste includes household, commercial, and industrial waste. Construction and operation permits are issued based on information provided by the applicant and verified by Solid Waste Branch staff. A Regulatory Time Frame (RTF) is the allocated amount of time that the Division is given to complete permit actions. The specific RTFs can be found in the regulations for both solid and hazardous waste permits. In FY25 the solid waste staff approved one hundred forty-five (145) permitting actions and ninety percent (90%) were within the RTF.

- Over the past five years, staff have completed an average of ninety-two percent (92%) of permit application reviews within the RTF.
- At the end of FY25, there were seventy-nine (79) pending actions and, of those, twenty-two (22) exceeded the RTF.

In addition, staff issued thirty (30) denials for solid waste permitting activities, four (4) withdrawal final actions and fourteen (14) approvals for the closure and termination of permitted activities. Staff also coordinated the issuance of sixteen (16) public notices and issued one (1) response-to-comments document.

Solid Waste landfills submit waste quantity reports to the Division on a quarterly basis. The table below (Table 1) summarizes the tonnage of waste received by Kentucky's landfills and provides a breakdown of waste origin. This table does not represent the tonnage of waste generated in Kentucky and sent to another state for disposal.

Quarter and Year	Tons of Waste Received for Disposal	Tons of Waste Received from Out of State for Disposal	% of Out of State Waste	Tons of Waste Received for Alternate Daily Cover
2Q 2024	1,866,804.00	377,725.10	20.2%	77,129.20
3Q 2024	1,789,926.50	363,854.60	20.3%	82,298.94
4Q 2024	1,767,700.20	361,391.60	19.2%	79,696.64
1Q 2025	1,655,338.40	358,828.20	19.9%	79,107.29

Table 1: Summary of Waste Quantity Reports

The last column in the table above represents an additional tonnage of waste received by contained landfills and used for alternate daily cover (ADC) which reduces disposal tonnage. The staff reviews ADC applications on a case-by-case basis, and waste is evaluated as acceptable for use as daily cover in lieu of, or in addition to, soil cover.

The Solid Waste staff oversee the permitting activities of one hundred fifty-eight (158) landfill disposal facilities of various types with active permits. Staff also issue permits to facilities that divert waste from disposal and reuse it in ways that preserve natural resources and prevent pollution. These facilities include locations where waste is beneficially reused, such as landfarms, where waste is used to promote soil structure and fertility; or composting and sludge giveaway operations, which distribute processed waste for use. There are one hundred (100) special waste beneficial reuse facilities and at least thirty-eight (38) solid waste beneficial reuse facilities authorized for beneficial reuse. There are thirty-four (34) sites with active compost permits, twenty-five (25) sites with active landfarm permits, and thirty-five (35) sites with active sludge giveaway or storage and treatment permits.

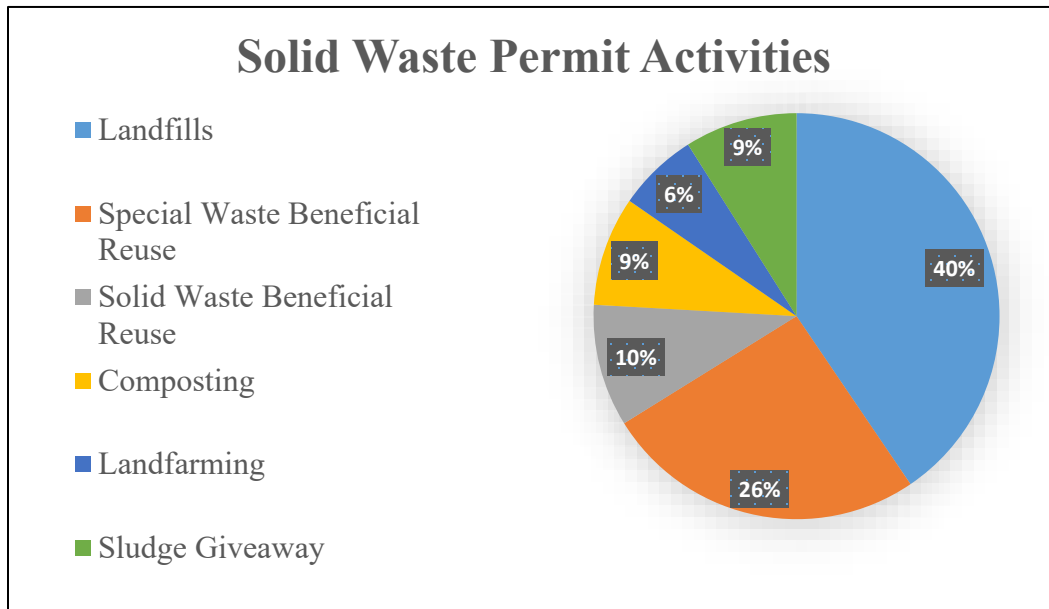


Figure 1: Solid Waste Permit Activities by Type

A landfill is a permitted site for the disposal of solid or special waste that must be designed and operated to specific criteria. Landfills often include specific areas for sorting waste, containing leachate and monitoring groundwater. There are several different kinds of landfills based on the waste streams disposed of there. The capacity of a landfill is monitored to ensure environmental standards are maintained throughout the life of the permit. The table below (Table 2) summarizes the current and remaining capacity of Kentucky's landfills.



Solid Waste Landfill Activity Type	Number of Facilities	Permitted Airspace Capacity Authorized (cubic yards)	Current Waste in Place (cubic yards)	Remaining Permitted Airspace Capacity (cubic yards)
<b>Contained Landfills</b>	26	470,281,410	201,593,178	268,688,232
<b>Construction/Demolition Disposal &gt;1 Acre Landfills</b>	7	7,570,976	4,674,916	2,896,060
<b>Residual Landfills<sup>1</sup></b>	19	35,922,780	16,641,316	19,281,392
<b>Construction/Demolition Disposal &lt;1 Acre Landfills</b>	79	3,160,000	Annual Survey Data reporting is not required under KRS 224.40-120	Annual Survey Data reporting is not required under KRS 224.40-120

Table 2: Current and remaining capacity of Kentucky's landfills

## ENVIRONMENTAL REMEDIATION FEE AND OTHER FEES

The Environmental Remediation Fee (ERF) was established by KRS 224.43-500 and requires generators of waste in Kentucky to pay \$1.75 per ton of solid waste that is disposed of in a municipal solid waste landfill. The ERFs are deposited into the Kentucky Pride Fund and used to support grants for the cleanup of illegal open dumps, recycling, and household hazardous waste management.

ENVIRONMENTAL REMEDIATION FEES COLLECTED			
2025 1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	2025 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter	2025 3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	2025 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter
\$3,165,568.47	\$3,078,711.37	\$2,923,738.99	\$2,763,577.68

Table 3: Environmental Remediation Fees

Some ERF funds are also used to characterize, remediate, and close old historic residential landfills that were never properly closed (see Historic Landfill Sites Section). Compliance rates for submission of the ERF continue to be high.

In addition to the ERF, solid waste branch program facilities paid \$767,850.00 in FY25 in fees. Of that, \$189,350.00 was collected for forty-nine (49) solid waste and special waste permitting actions, and \$578,500.00 was paid for the annual recurring fee for Coal Combustion Residual facilities, Merchant Electric Generating Facilities (MEGF) and solid waste facilities. Compliance for payment is one hundred percent (100%) for both types of non-ERF fees.

<sup>1</sup> Residual Landfill – A facility designed and operated to dispose a limited number of nonhazardous wastes generated by manufacturing or industrial processes that are fully characterizable. Many of these facilities are located on the same property as the plant that generates the waste.

## HISTORIC LANDFILL SITES

A total of one hundred ten (110) historic landfills have been closed through construction and remediation projects or by no further action due to intensive site studies, and five hundred thirteen (513) historic landfills remain to be closed. Total costs associated with the closure projects exceed \$74 million, excluding branch personnel direct and indirect expenses. To qualify for remediation under the Historic Landfill program, the landfill must have stopped accepting waste prior to July 1, 1992. Funding for historic landfill closure is from the Kentucky Pride account. The table below (Table 4) expands on sites identified as an eligible historical landfill pursuant to KRS 224.43-505.

Historic Landfill Sites				
Eligible Sites	Sites Characterized	Sites with ongoing Characterization	Sites undergone corrective action and/or closure	Sites with ongoing corrective action and/or closure
660	193	27	27	6

Table 4: Eligible historical landfill sites

## GROUNDWATER MONITORING AT SOLID WASTE FACILITIES

Groundwater assessment requires the owner or operator of a facility to determine the existence, extent, and depth of groundwater degradation, as well as the rate and direction of migration of contaminants in the groundwater. Of the seventy-two (72) facilities required to monitor groundwater, twenty (20) are in groundwater assessment (27%).

Corrective action requires the owner or operator of a facility to abate groundwater contamination, prevent further groundwater contamination from the facility, and restore or replace public or private water supplies affected by contamination from the waste facility. Groundwater corrective action is currently being carried out by five (5) facilities (7%).

## RECYCLING AND WASTE MINIMIZATION

In accordance with KRS 224.43-315, Kentucky recyclers are required to report annually to their counties the amount of municipal solid waste collected for recycling by volume, weight, or number of items, and the type of items recycled. The Division of Waste Management staff rely on individual counties and recycling operations to report accurate data. The Division confirms and crosschecks these numbers to ensure that the entities are generally consistent and provide uniform data. An effort is also made to interpret the raw data in a way that allows a useful comparison to recycling rates calculated by other states and by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Kentucky's calculated recycling rate is 24.14% for FY24 (most recent data). The FY23 recalculated recycling rate is 29.19%. There was a reduction in Kentucky's recycling rate from the previous year. This could possibly be due to the unfortunate closure of a few recycling centers throughout the state.



Recycling rates normally fluctuate over time due to a variety of factors. Commodity prices are a major factor. Smaller recycling operations are particularly sensitive to decreased revenue when commodity prices are low, often resulting in scaling back or even closing operations. Overall economic conditions including fuel prices also affect a community's ability to operate a successful recycling operation. Personnel issues (cost and retention) play a role as well, and small recycling operations often rely on inmate labor which presents its own challenges.

The Cabinet has continued to fund local recycling operations through our Recycling, Composting and Household Hazardous Waste Grant program, providing a total of \$6.2 million in FY25. This has allowed many counties with existing recycling operations to improve and expand and has also helped some counties with little or no recycling to begin recycling operations.

The Cabinet received funds in FY24 from the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which provided a historic and unprecedented investment in our country's waste management and recycling infrastructure. This is provided through a new source of EPA funding that is intended to improve and support the development and expansion of local waste management and recycling programs. One item for which the Cabinet plans to use these funds is a review of agency data collection and management processes to ensure that the agency is generating accurate and consistent recycling data that can be usefully compared to historic state and local data, as well as data from other states and the EPA.

## GRANTS AND FUNDING

### WASTE TIRE TRUST FUND

The Waste Tire Trust Fund (WTTF) is generated through a fee on all new motor vehicle tires sold in Kentucky. It is used to conduct waste tire collection events, provide an annual grant to counties for waste tire management, award crumb rubber and rubber-modified asphalt grants, facilitate market development for the use of waste tires, and to clean up waste tires at mismanaged sites. In the 2018 session of the General Assembly, the previous \$1 per tire fee was increased to \$2 per tire. The Waste Tire Trust Fund is scheduled to expire on June 30, 2026, pursuant to KRS 224.50-868. The Energy and Environment Cabinet is currently drafting a legislative proposal requesting to extend the fund for an additional two years.

### WASTE TIRE COLLECTION EVENTS

During the fall of 2024 and spring of 2025, waste tire collection events were conducted in the counties comprising the Bluegrass, Lake Cumberland and Lincoln Trail Area Development Districts (ADDs). The equivalent of 827,048 waste tires were recovered through the FY25 collection events at a cost of \$3,058,851.

### CRUMB RUBBER/TIRE DERIVED PRODUCTS GRANT

In 2025, the Division awarded thirty-seven (37) grants totaling \$1,400,000 for the application of crumb rubber used for landscaping or other tire-derived products and poured-in-place rubberized pavement projects (used for walking trails, playgrounds, tracks, outdoor patios, or courtyards).

Other popular requests with the 2025 grant applications were picnic tables and benches made from recycled tires. This grant does not fund crumb rubber applied to athletic fields, or loose shredded playground mulch. From 2004 to 2024, the Division awarded six hundred nineteen (619) grants totaling over \$13.2 million to local governments, schools, daycares, churches, and other entities for projects that utilize products made from recycled tires.

## RUBBER MODIFIED ASPHALT

In the spring of 2016, the Division launched the Rubber-Modified Asphalt (RMA) Grant program. This grant funds the paving of approximately one mile of a county road with RMA, with the county then required to pave the same area of a similar road with standard asphalt, and to monitor both sections for a five-year period. The Division awarded nine (9) RMA grants in FY25 totaling \$1.16 million. This is the ninth year RMA grants have been offered and have funded projects valued at nearly \$4.4 million in thirty-four (34) counties since the program began. RMA is slowly becoming more common across the U.S. and has been found in many applications to improve durability and performance of pavement at a competitive price. There are several different methods for incorporating recycled tire rubber into pavement and the grant is open to two different types of paving: chip seal (a process that combines one or more layers of asphalt with one or more layers of aggregate), and thin overlay (approximately 1.5-inch asphalt layer installed over existing asphalt pavement).

## KENTUCKY PRIDE FUND

The Kentucky Pride Fund is supported by an environmental remediation fee of \$1.75 per ton of waste disposed of in Kentucky landfills. This money is used for closure of historic landfills, recycling grants, household hazardous waste management grants, and remediation of illegal open dumps. Additionally, this fund receives \$5 million annually from the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, specifically for distribution to counties and incorporated cities (who have a solid waste ordinance or a solid waste contract with a hauler) for litter abatement activities.

## LITTER ABATEMENT

Since 2001, the Division has been tracking the cost of litter activities and the amount of litter collected. Litter abatement grant funding through the Kentucky Pride Fund was initiated in FY02. Pursuant to KRS 224.43-505, grants are awarded based on a county's road miles, rural population and total population. Since 2003, state and local governments have cleaned 3.78 million miles of roadways with help from these grants. In FY25 \$5.23 million was awarded to Kentucky counties and cities in Litter Abatement Grants. Counties report on all litter abatement activities, including activities conducted outside of the grant program. This data may not include litter collected by state road crews as part of the Transportation Cabinet's efforts to maintain state roads. Litter collection is expensive; therefore, counties are encouraged to utilize some of their grant funding for education and outreach activities to help prevent littering. The most common items found on roadways are plastic bottles and food containers. In 2024 (the most recently available data), counties removed 562,519 bags of litter (an estimated 11,250,380 pounds) from 155,290.12 miles of Kentucky roadways at a total cost of over \$11 million. There has been a substantial variation of dollars spent per number of bags collected over the past ten (10) years. Collection and record

keeping procedures might not be consistent among the counties. Expenses such as education and outreach, which do not contribute to the number of bags collected, can vary considerably from year to year.

## ILLEGAL OPEN DUMPSITES

In 2024 (the most recently available data), counties cleaned fifty-three (53) illegal open dumps at a cost of approximately \$723,178 and collected 1,256 tons of waste. Open Dump grants were awarded in January 2025 for the remediation of eighty-seven (87) dumpsites at a projected cost of \$932,023.51. Since the Division's Open Dump Grant program was updated in 2006, over 2,626 illegal open dumpsites have been addressed at a cost of \$26.4 million.

## RECYCLING, COMPOSTING, AND HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE GRANTS

The Kentucky Pride Fund provides funds for grants for the development and expansion of recycling programs and household hazardous waste (HHW) management. In recent years, this program has begun to provide grant funding for composting operations as well. The recycling and composting grants help fund infrastructure to promote a regional approach to decrease the amount of waste going to Kentucky landfills. The HHW grants fund county collection events that encourage proper management of such wastes as electronic scrap, pesticides, solvents, mercury, and other potentially hazardous products from residences.

During FY25, seventy (70) entities were awarded grants totaling \$6.2 million. A total of twenty-eight (28) recycling grants and 9 composting grants were awarded to cities, counties, and universities. HHW grants were awarded to thirty-three (33) cities and counties in Kentucky, resulting in the collection of over four hundred (400) tons of material. Recipients of these grants are required to provide a 25% local match in the form of cash or "in-kind" personnel, educational activities/materials, or advertising to promote the program.

## STATE OFFICE PAPER RECYCLING

The State Office Paper Recycling Program serves more than one hundred sixteen (116) agencies in Frankfort. The program offers free pickup and document destruction of governmental office paper. Their warehouse on Northgate Drive in Frankfort offers a secure environment to ensure proper processing of confidential documents. Office paper represents approximately 70% of the waste stream in the office environment. Since 2006, state employees have recycled more than 26,154 tons of wastepaper, generating approximately \$4.13 million in revenue.

In FY24 (the most recent available data), state employees recycled 595.87 tons of wastepaper, generating \$81,865 in revenue. Commodity prices for cardboard and various paper grades are highly variable. However, the Government Recycling Section can generate high quality, desirable bales through an emphasis on proper sorting and processing, so even in poor market conditions this material is in demand.



Figure 2: Large Paper Shredder & Baler at Paper Recycling Warehouse, Franklin County

## ELECTRONIC SCRAP RECYCLING

Proper management of waste computer and electronic parts and equipment (e-scrap) continues to be a challenge throughout the state. Many counties offer some type of e-scrap collection, year-round drop-off programs, or periodic events.

The Division holds a contract with Powerhouse Recycling who successfully collected and processed 288.41 tons of e-scrap in 2024. To date, the primary users of the contract have been state agencies and county school districts and Boards of Education. However, county governments have been encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity to properly manage their e-scrap. E-scrap generators continue to be reimbursed for certain items which should make this an attractive option for county governments, and it is expected that more of them will start utilizing the contract going forward. The Division also promotes proper management of e-scrap through the Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Grant Program provided by the Kentucky Pride Fund.

## SOLID WASTE REDUCTION – EDUCATION & OUTREACH

In 2018, the Local Planning and Assistance Section initiated a training and development program for local government officials, solid waste management coordinators, stakeholders and the public. The program is designed to help the Commonwealth plan, implement, and evaluate solid waste practices for their area. Strategic planning for facilities and waste reduction is the overall goal of the program and includes supporting local initiatives, coordinating with regional organizations and facilitating stakeholder engagement to achieve waste reduction and facility planning. The program focuses on targeted topics related to solid waste management strategies and includes on-site training, annual workshops, informational materials, and partnerships with local organizations to raise awareness and encourage participation in waste reduction and recycling incentives.

## SOLID WASTE REDUCTION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

Kentucky prioritizes waste reduction through implementing strategies such as source reduction with industry, reuse, recycling, and composting. These efforts aim to reduce waste generation, promote resource efficiency, and minimize environmental impacts. The collaboration with private sector partnerships plays a crucial role in the implementation of the plan by providing expertise, resources, and innovation to address waste management challenges effectively.

Some innovative technology and approaches that Kentucky uses in the management plan include advanced sorting technologies at recycling facilities, creating waste to energy facilities, grant funding for the creation of compost programs, working with single stream recycling systems for improvement, and public and local official education programs to promote recycling and waste reduction.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Kentucky will continue to ensure that every citizen has the ability to be included in the development of this plan through the inclusion of community engagement processes, conducting environmental impact assessments, and implementing programs targeted towards all communities across the Commonwealth.

Kentucky will employ a variety of strategies to reduce waste and promote composting and organic waste diversion. These strategies will include providing education and outreach programs, offering incentives, implementing regulations, and supporting an infrastructure for the counties.

Kentucky will continue to monitor and evaluate the progress of the goals and targets of the plan through creating a quality assurance standard of operation procedure for tracking waste generation rates, recycling and diversion rates, and compliance with regulations and statutes. Audits, inspections, and evaluation of the implementation of the plan will be used to identify areas of improvement and the need for any revisions/amendments.

Kentucky will continue to utilize the most recent technology and a diverse outreach/educational program. These will include creating web-based communication and collaboration with counties, and on-line form submittal to reduce the amount of resources needed.

Kentucky will continue to manage construction and demolition waste through regulations that promote recycling, reuse, and proper disposal. These regulations will consider all aspects of waste diversion available to that industry, an infrastructure for the counties to work with the industry, and incentives to reuse/recycle, and partnership with non-profit organizations, such as Habitat for Humanity.

Kentucky will expand collaboration with other states and regions for out-of-area waste management issues through sharing of best practices, information exchange, joint monitoring efforts, and coordinated waste disposal programs.

Kentucky will continue to encourage producer/generator responsibility to promote sustainable materials management and product stewardship through the creation of industry/private business partnerships and education/outreach.

## CREDITS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### **Commonwealth of Kentucky**

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### **Energy and Environment Cabinet**

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This annual report is intended to provide a concise set of facts and measurements to support environmental decision making. We welcome your questions and comments to the contacts below:

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June 2025

