



# FY2026 SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN ANNUAL REPORT

Fiscal Year 2026

Prepared by:  
Kentucky 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 late 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 report has been prepared pursuant to the requirements of KRS 224.43-310(4) and provides a detailed assessment of current solid waste management practices, waste generation trends, infrastructure capacity, and diversion rates in the Commonwealth. The report identifies key challenges and opportunities in areas such as waste reduction, recycling, landfill optimization, public education, and recommends improvement strategies. 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 FY2026 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 sessions of the Kentucky General Assembly have resulted in the enactment of several measures amending portions of the Kentucky Revised Statutes (KRS) governing solid waste programs administered by the Division of Waste Management (Division). During the 2026 Regular Session, multiple bills affecting Division programs were reviewed prior to enactment.

Senate Bill 29 created a new section of KRS Chapter 109 that prohibits a county where waste is generated from assessing a fee, permitting requirement, or other authorization requirement on a solid waste management facility that is collecting, storing, transporting, transferring, processing, treating, or disposing of solid waste if that solid waste management facility is located in a different county or waste management district. The legislation also amended KRS 224.40-315 to exclude certain waste sites or facilities from classification as municipal solid waste disposal facilities if the facility is owned and operated by a solid waste generator and accepts only industrial solid waste generated from that entity's activities on the same, contiguous, or adjacent property. The exclusion also applies to industrial solid waste received from a corporate affiliate or generated at another facility owned by the generator. A floor amendment further extended this exclusion to certain existing permitted facilities located on property owned by the same generator but situated in a different county, provided the facility accepts only industrial solid waste from that generator. The final floor amendment specified that horizontal and vertical expansions, including contiguous properties owned prior to January 1, 2026, are excluded from these provisions.

Senate Bill 49 established a new subchapter within KRS 224.50 to prohibit the disposal of covered batteries in solid waste disposal or recycling containers and to require the Cabinet to develop a Covered Battery Stewardship Program. The legislation directs the Cabinet to facilitate the formation of Voluntary Battery Stewardship Organizations, establish registration processes and requirements, and define minimum standards for voluntary battery stewardship plans. The program is intended to support public outreach and education regarding risks associated with lithium-ion battery disposal.

House Bill 677 amended KRS 278.704, KRS 278.706, KRS 278.710, KRS 278.714, and KRS 278.718 to revise provisions related to merchant electric generating facilities. The amendments include modifications to minimum bonding requirements, the addition of provisions addressing wind turbine facilities and associated mitigation measures, and requirements related to facility removal. The revised bonding provisions require that bond amounts be set at the greater of the

estimated decommissioning cost or the amount established by the applicable local government. The legislation also modified removal requirements, transitioning from a standard requiring removal to a depth of three (3) feet to a requirement for removal of facilities in their entirety. House Bill 869 subsequently amended provisions established by House Bill 677, revising KRS 278.706 to require decommissioning plans to include measures to restore the land to a substantially similar condition existing prior to construction. House Bill 869 also revised bonding requirements for solar electric generating facilities to require bond amounts equal to either the net present value of the total estimated decommissioning cost or the amount established by the applicable local government.

House Bill 757 amended KRS 224.50-868 to extend the Waste Tire Trust Fund fee for an additional eight (8) years, establishing a new sunset date of June 30, 2034. The legislation also amended KRS 224.50-872 to require the Cabinet to submit an additional annual report on the Waste Tire Trust Fund. The report must include total receipts, a detailed accounting of funded activities and administrative expenses, identification of unexpended funds with explanations, alignment of expenditures with program objectives, a list of funding recipients with associated amounts, and a compilation of information reported pursuant to KRS 224.50-878(4). The report is required to be submitted annually to the Interim Joint Committee on Appropriations and Revenue by November 1.

Administrative regulations related to the Division 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.

- The merchant electric generating facilities program operates under the authority of the Kentucky State Board on Electric Generation and Transmission Siting in accordance with KRS 278.700 to 278.718. The Division is responsible for reviewing operating and ownership transfer notices; evaluating decommissioning plans and associated bonding; conducting compliance monitoring and enforcement of mitigation measures; and collecting annual fees in accordance with KRS 224.10-285, KRS 278.706, KRS 278,710, and 401 KAR Chapter 103. As of the date of this report, eight (8) facilities are operating under this program.

## 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. So far in FY2026, the Solid Waste staff approved one hundred eighteen (118) 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.
- There are eighty-one (81) pending actions and, of those, seventeen (17) exceed the RTF.

In addition, staff issued twelve (12) denials for solid waste permitting activities and eleven (11) approvals for the closure and termination of permitted activities. Staff also coordinated the issuance of twelve (12) public notices and issued two (2) response-to-public comments documents.

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 through May 1st, 2026, 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
<b>Q4 FY2025</b>	2,023,737	392,799	19%	86,818
<b>Q1 FY2026</b>	1,961,816	438,864	22.4%	89,964
<b>Q2 FY2026</b>	1,858,806	449,948	24.2%	89,074
<b>Q3 FY2026<sup>1</sup></b>	633,783	136,083	21.5%	59,461

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-one (151) 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 thirty-seven (37) solid waste facilities authorized for beneficial reuse. There are thirty-four (34) sites with active compost permits, twenty-five (25) sites with active landfarm permits, and forty-five (45) sites with active sludge giveaway or storage and treatment permits.

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<sup>1</sup> Data reported for Q3 FY2026 does not represent total waste disposal, as permittees are required to submit disposal reports for that period no later than May 1 of each year.

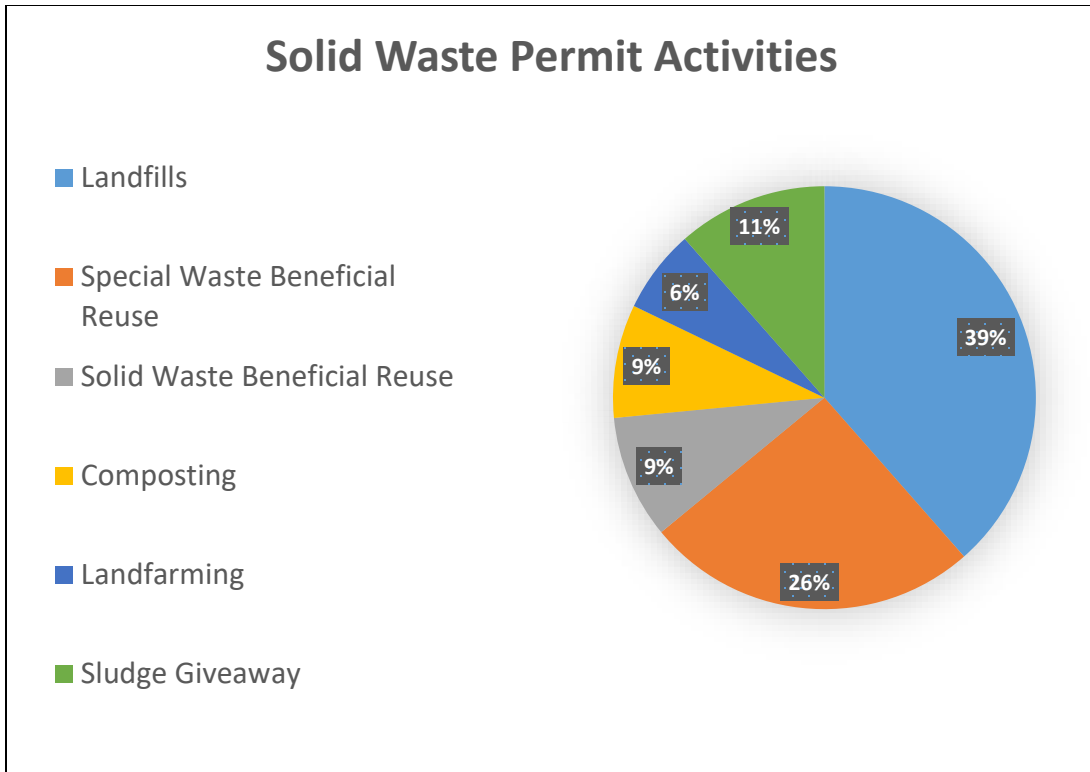


Figure 1: Solid Waste Permit Activities by Type

A landfill is a permitted site for the disposal of solid or special waste that must be designed and operated to specific criteria. 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 active Kentucky 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>	25	469,594,830	203,873,690	265,721,140
<b>Construction/Demolition Disposal &gt;1 Acre Landfills</b>	6	5,250,261	2,232,011	3,018,250
<b>Residual Landfills<sup>2</sup></b>	20	35,536,387	16,457,373	19,079,014
<b>Construction/Demolition Disposal &lt;1 Acre Landfills</b>	80	3,200,000	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<sup>3</sup>

**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. The table below shows data collected through May 1st, 2026.

<sup>2</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.

<sup>3</sup> Table 2 does not reflect closed facilities with active permits or coal combustion residual landfills as these permits are not subject to the referenced reporting data.

FY2026 1st Quarter	FY2026 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter	FY2026 3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	FY2026 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter
\$3,429,695.79	\$3,193,440.06	\$3,372,577.96	\$1,430,386.69

Table 3: Environmental Remediation Fees

Some ERF funds are also used to characterize, remediate, and close old historic residential sites 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 regulated facilities paid \$562,350 in fees for FY2026 as of the date of this report. Of that, \$107,850 was collected for thirty-seven (37) solid waste and special waste permitting landfill actions, and \$454,500 was paid for the annual recurring fee for coal combustion residual facilities, merchant electric generating facilities, and solid waste facilities. Compliance for payment is one hundred percent (100%) for both types of non-ERF fees.

## HISTORIC LANDFILL SITES

A total of one hundred sixteen (116) historic landfills have been closed through construction and remediation projects or by no further action due to intensive site studies, and five hundred eleven (511) historic landfills remain to be closed. Total costs associated with the closure projects exceed \$77 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. Table 4, below, expands on sites identified as an eligible historical landfill pursuant to KRS 224.43-505.

Eligible Sites	Sites Characterized	Sites with ongoing Characterization	Sites undergone corrective action and/or closure	Sites with ongoing corrective action and/or closure
627	242	45	27	4

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, sixteen (16) are in groundwater assessment (22%).

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 staff relies on individual counties and recycling operations to report accurate data. The Division confirms and cross-checks these numbers to ensure that the entities are generally consistent and provide uniform data. An effort is also made to review 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 for calendar year 2024 (most recent available data) is 29.9%. Counties submit their recycling information on a calendar year basis, and the 2025 data will be available in June after processing.

Recycling rates 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 its Recycling, Composting and Household Hazardous Waste Grant programs, providing a total of \$6.2 million in FY2025. For FY2026, the program received 85 applications requesting over \$11.8 million in funding. These grants have allowed many counties with existing recycling operations to improve and expand and have also helped some counties with little or no recycling to begin recycling operations.

The Cabinet received funds in FY2024 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 EPA funding source 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. In FY2026, the Cabinet was awarded a second round of funding from the EPA. These funds will help bolster metals recycling throughout the state and establish a battery stewardship program required by recently enacted legislation.

## GRANTS AND FUNDING

### WASTE TIRE TRUST FUND

The Waste Tire Trust Fund (WTF) 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. House Bill 757 amended KRS 224.50-868 to extend the Waste Tire Trust Fund fee for an additional eight (8) years, establishing a new sunset date of June 30, 2034.

### WASTE TIRE COLLECTION EVENTS

During the fall of 2025 and spring of 2026, waste tire collection events were conducted in the counties comprising the Buffalo Trace, FIVCO, Cumberland Valley, Gateway, Big Sandy, and Kentucky River Area Development Districts (ADDs). The equivalent of 562,826 waste tires was recovered through FY2026 collection events at a cost of \$591,101 as of the date of this report. Program expenditures are anticipated to increase as invoices from the Spring 2026 collection events are received.

### CRUMB RUBBER/TIRE DERIVED PRODUCTS GRANT

In 2026, the Division received 44 grant applications totaling \$1.54 million in requests. At the time of this report, the number of 2026 grant awards and their dollar amounts are still being determined by RLA application review. In FY2025, 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 2025, the Division awarded eight hundred twenty-seven (827) grants totaling over \$13.3 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 FY2025 totaling \$1.16 million. This is the tenth 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 many applications have shown improved 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 (that 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 FY2002. 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. For FY2026, \$5.25 million was awarded to Kentucky counties and cities in Litter Abatement Grants, and for FY2025, \$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 in the 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 February 2026 for the remediation of seventy-eight (78) dumpsites at a projected cost of \$763,571.64. Since the Division's Open Dump Grant program was established in 2006, over 2,626 illegal open dumpsites have been remediated 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 reducing waste sent to Kentucky landfills. The HHW grants fund county collection events that encourage proper management of household hazardous waste, including electronic scrap, pesticides, solvents, mercury, and other potentially hazardous products generated in residences.

During FY2025, seventy (70) entities were awarded grants totaling \$6.2 million. A total of twenty-eight (28) recycling grants and nine (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. The program's 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 26,910 tons of wastepaper, generating approximately \$4.22 million in revenue.

In FY2025 (the most recent available data), state employees recycled 756.18 tons of wastepaper, generating \$88,221.46 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. Confidential documents generated daily in state offices are shredded at no cost to state agencies, saving taxpayer funds and assuring confidentiality to the agencies using our services.



Figure 2: 100 millionth pound placed by Governor Beshear and Charlie Peters (who started the recycling program)

## 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, which successfully collected and processed 357.30 tons of e-scrap in 2025, an increase of 24% from the previous year. To date, the primary users of the contract have been state agencies, county school districts, and Boards of Education. County governments are also encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity to properly manage their e-scrap. E-scrap generators continue to be reimbursed for certain items which makes this an attractive option for all agencies, and increased use of this contract is expected. 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 the 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. The Kentucky Government Recycling Section (GRS) conducts education and outreach to those supported in the public and private sectors. The section partnered with Second Street School in Frankfort to develop a booth displaying examples of how plastic bottles can be made into t-shirts for their Earth Day event.

## 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.

Kentucky employs innovative approaches and technologies in its planning model, including advanced sorting technologies at recycling facilities, waste-to-energy facilities, grant funding for the creation of compost programs, improvements to single stream recycling systems, and public and local official education programs to promote recycling and waste reduction. Additionally, with funding secured through the Federal Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling program, improvements are being made to the state's data collection and management practices. These changes are expected to take effect in 2027 and will simplify county reporting requirements, leading to more reliable waste stream data and improved future planning efforts.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Kentucky should continue to ensure that all citizens have opportunities to participate in the development of the plan through community engagement processes, environmental impact assessments, and implementation of programs serving communities across the Commonwealth.

Kentucky should employ a variety of strategies to reduce waste generation and promote composting and organic waste diversion, including education and outreach initiatives, incentive-based programs, regulatory measures, and support for county infrastructure development.

Kentucky should continue to monitor and evaluate progress toward the goals and objectives of the triennial Statewide Solid Waste Reduction and Management Plan through the development of quality assurance standard operating procedures for tracking waste generation, recycling and diversion rates, and compliance with applicable statutes and administrative regulations. Audits, inspections, and implementation evaluations should be utilized for improvement and determine whether revisions or amendments to the plan are necessary.

Kentucky should continue to utilize emerging technologies and diverse outreach and educational strategies, including web-based communication and collaboration with counties and online form submittal processes, to improve efficiency and reduce resource demands.

Kentucky should continue to manage construction and demolition waste through regulations and policies that promote recycling, reuse, and proper disposal practices. These efforts should consider available waste diversion opportunities, including county infrastructure, reuse and recycling incentives, and partnerships with nonprofit organizations.

Kentucky should expand collaboration with neighboring states and regional partners on out-of-area waste management issues through the sharing of best practices, information exchange, joint monitoring efforts, and coordinated waste management programs. In 2026, the Division funded

school districts to participate in the Million Can Initiative which is a nationwide program to bolster aluminum recycling and reduce recyclables going into Kentucky landfills.

Kentucky should continue to encourage producer and generator responsibility to support sustainable materials management and product stewardship through the development of industry and private-sector partnerships, as well as continued education and outreach initiatives. The Covered Battery Stewardship Program is expected to be established by March 2027. In accordance with Senate Bill 49, the Cabinet will collaborate with a broad range of stakeholders to facilitate implementation of the program, including manufacturers, wholesalers, distributors, retailers of covered batteries and battery-containing products, material recyclers, solid waste collectors and disposal facilities, municipalities and counties, voluntary battery stewardship organizations, and waste management districts.

# CREDITS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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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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