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WasteCon 2013: New York City Considers Waste Conversion Technologies

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The New York City Department of Sanitation's is evaluating proposals from two vendors.

REW Staff

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Sarah Dolinar of the New York City Department of Sanitation (at podium) updates attendees of WasteCon 2013 on New York City's selection of a waste conversion technology. Susan Raila (at left) and Joe Murdoch (center) of HDR Inc. also participated in the discussion.

As New York City looks at its future waste management needs, waste conversion technologies are part of the equation. During the Solid Waste Association of North America (SWANA) 2013 WasteCon conference in Long Beach, Calif., a technical session titled "New York City's Waste Conversion Technology Pilot: is the Technology Ripe Enough for the Big Apple?" addressed where the city is at in the evaluation of technologies to handle the estimated 50,000 tons of waste and recyclables the city generates each day.

Sarah Dolinar, director of environmental review for New York City Department of Sanitation (DSNY) along with Susan Raila, project manager

with the consulting firm HDR Inc., Omaha, Neb., brought attendees up to speed on the city's past, present and future waste management strategies. Dolinar discussed how in the 1980s the city's waste was handled within the city with five landfills, eight marine transfer stations and five incinerators, along with many apartment incinerators.

Dolinar said a waste-to-energy project that took 11 years to evaluate was once proposed but was never built. And a proposal to build WTE facilities in each of the five boroughs was waylaid, she added. By the time 1996 came around, only one landfill, Fresh Kills, remained and it was scheduled to close in 2001. The city needed to come up with a new solid waste management plan (SWMP) for its waste handling. The key goals for DSNY's SWMP for 2006-2025 included:

- Increase recycling and build a recycling processing facility in Brooklyn;
- End long-haul trucking and maximize exporting waste out of state via rail and barge;
- Develop containerized facilities for DSNY-managed waste in each borough;
- Stabilize costs through 20-year contracts; and
- Evaluate and build pilot plants for alternative municipal solid waste (MSW) technologies.

"It has taken us some time, but we are going through the final throes of implementation now," said Raila.

Regarding the evaluation of alternative technologies for municipal solid waste, the proposed technology needed to meet certain criteria, including that it could not be conventional mass-burn WTE or refuse-derived fuel combustion. The requirements for a reference facility included that it have a minimum processing capacity of 20 tons per day and that the preferred feedstock be MSW.

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HDR is assisting the evaluation committee. DSNY is currently in negotiations with two different vendors, reported Dolinar. She did not identify the companies, but said that one of the proposals is for anaerobic digestion (AD) and the other is for gasification.

WasteCon 2013 was Sept. 17-19 at the Long Beach Convention Center in Long Beach.



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