

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

# Dover, New Hampshire

Population: **26,000**

Type of Community: **Rural**

Type of Program: **Bag and Tag**

Program Start Date: **October 1991**

*Pay-as-you-throw has proven to be a very effective means of managing Dover's solid waste.*

## Getting Started: Why Pay-As-You-Throw?

The City of Dover is a community of approximately 26,000 people on New Hampshire's seacoast. Our municipal landfill was closed in 1979, and at that time the city entered into a relationship with a private hauler for collection and disposal at a privately owned and operated landfill. The city collected approximately 24,000 tons of trash each year, of which approximately 11,000 tons were residential refuse.

Before 1989, Dover had no recycling program. Any and all trash residents wished to discard was left at the curb, and 3½ truck routes were needed to collect the refuse daily. The cost of refuse collection and disposal was escalating rapidly. Responding to citizen pressure, the

Dover city council created an ad hoc committee on recycling in the fall of 1989.

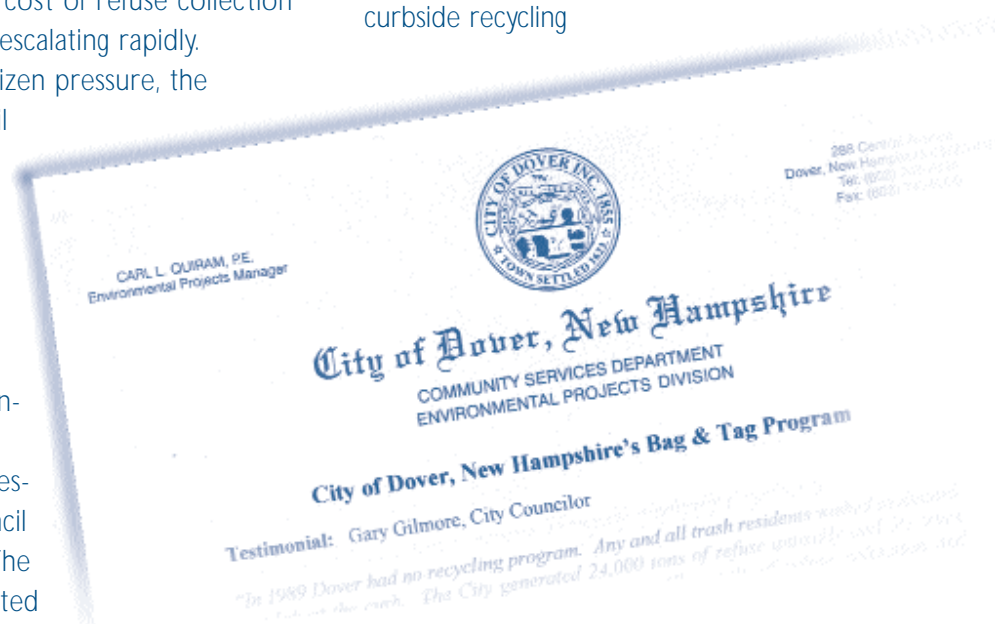
The committee, chaired by Gary Gilmore, city councilor, consisted of eight interested residents and a council representative. The committee reported

back to the council 4 months later with 10 recommendations.

The committee urged the immediate establishment of a drop-off recycling center designed to collect a wide range of materials. The recycling center opened in May 1990. It quickly became very popular and a source of civic pride.

The recycling center was run initially as an all-volunteer effort. After a few months, the city hired a solid waste coordinator, who began working in conjunction with the ad hoc committee and several city councilors to urge the establishment of curbside recycling

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and the bag and tag program, which was then unknown in northern New England.

### Overcoming Public Dissent

The three public meetings we held were filled with heated vocal dissent. However, we soon convinced the public to accept these programs with a couple of basic premises. The first premise was that recyclable materials are a commodity, and anything that is disposed of in the landfill is waste. We argued that the costs for producing wastes should be borne by the user and that the costs of recycling, because of its social and environmental benefits, should be borne by the city.

In September 1991, the city began curbside collection of recyclables, and a month later the bag and tag program was implemented. In conjunction with the establishment of these programs, the city council created a Citizen's Solid Waste Advisory Committee responsible for overseeing these programs.

Since the program was initiated we have had annual public meetings and have raised the price once. We have not had any significant public dissent at any meetings since the program's inception. Overall, the program has been well received by the community and has proven to be a very effective means of managing Dover's solid waste.

### How Does It Work?

The city no longer provides for the collection and disposal of private dumpsters. Commercial generators pay the fees associated with the collection and disposal. For the residents, payment of the collection and disposal of wastes is accomplished through the purchase of bags and/or adhesive tags.

A special revenue fund was established to pay for the collection, disposal, and administrative costs associated with our residential solid waste. The fees generated by the sale of the bags and tags go into this fund as revenue. The goal is to maintain a neutral fund balance that can sustain the program, but not to build a large balance.

### Success: Saving Money and Reducing Waste

As mentioned earlier, Dover used to produce approximately 11,000 tons per year of residential solid waste. Last year, we produced approximately 3,900 tons. In 1990 our budget for solid waste was approximately \$1.2 million. Next year's budget (including trash and recycling) is approximately \$878,000. Our current recycling rate is well over 50 percent for our residential waste stream—despite it being strictly voluntary.