



## Message from the SWANA VA President (John Barnes)

It has been an absolute honor and privilege to serve as the President of the Old Dominion SWANA Chapter for the past two years. I can't believe my term as president has come to an end. I am very proud of what we've accomplished and I'm also very impressed with the skills, professionalism, and capabilities of our leadership team and overall Chapter.



There are many people to recognize for their support and contributions to our success, too many to list, but you know who are and your efforts are sincerely appreciated. Please know that your Chapter Board representatives work hard to bring you the training programs, tours, conferences, scholarships, YP events, track legislative and regulatory issues, coordinate with SWANA National, as well as communicate these important issues. The Chapter's relationship with DEQ continues to be an extremely valuable way to share concerns and to stay abreast of changes which ultimately allows us to better serve the citizens of Virginia and protect the environment. Chapter membership, financials, and participation continue to be very strong.

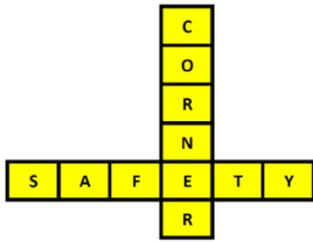
A few highlights include:

- ◇ The first ever joint SWANA/VRA conference in Spring of 2018 was so successful we're already planning to do it again in 2020. This conference format brings together all of the specialties of "Integrated Solid Waste Management" and gives us the opportunity to collaborate and share different perspectives. We're all in the same business, just different parts...
- ◇ We've increased opportunities to serve on committees. Our chapter is full of talented and knowledgeable people. Serving on committees is a great way to network, support the chapter, and improve the quality of our programs. And, we're always looking for help, so let us know.
- ◇ China's impact on recycling. Although we're mostly out of crisis mode, the dust is still settling. Having support, guidance, and networking opportunities through SWANA was, and continues to be, extremely beneficial.
- ◇ Increased focus on safety. Being the 5<sup>th</sup> most dangerous industry is not acceptable. Accidents are not OK, and is not "simply a cost of doing business." Safety is hard work. Changing cultures, developing procedures, providing training, identifying and addressing poor practices, and tracking incidents all requires focus, knowledge, and the ability make a difference. SWANA National has done a great job increasing safety awareness with things like the Safety Monday. The Old Dominion Chapter has started a Safety Committee, led by our Safety Ambassador Dennis Batts, to make sure that the safety practices for our members are as good as they can be. We're really just getting started, so we need your help. Please get involved!

I'd also like to acknowledge the previous presidents, officers, and board members who laid the foundation for what our chapter has become. Pete Carrico, who is stepping down from the Board, is the most recent of a long list of distinguished leaders that have made significant contributions. And, the future is bright! Congratulations to Ben Loveday, incoming President of the Old Dominion Chapter, along with Aaron White as Vice President, and Jon Clary as Secretary. Welcome to new Board Members Scott Messier and Mike Dorsey. And lastly, I encourage all members to become even more involved. The Chapter will benefit, your employer will benefit, and you will benefit.

Thank you for your continued support and Happy Holidays! - John Barnes, Chapter President

# Safety Corner



We all know safety matters, right? I mean, everyone has the same goal—to get their workers safely home at the end of each day. We probably all talk about safety in our staff meetings too, huh? Maybe we’ve even hired a safety person—or at least named someone our shop steward and asked them to attend an OSHA class. But is it enough?

Hopefully yours is one of the organizations that hasn’t had an OSHA recordable injury—or even any accidents—this year. If so, congratulations! But are you good or are you lucky? And what are you doing to ensure the same for next year or the year after that or ten years from now? Are you thinking about the safety of your employees and your customers when you make operational decisions? Is it at the forefront of your decision-making process? Have you shown them your commitment to their safety through your words AND your actions? Are you building a strong safety from both the top down and the bottom up?

If you are doing all these things or some of them or are even making it your New Year’s Resolution to commit more to creating and maintaining a safer work environment, we ask you to visit SWANA’s new *Hauler Safety Outreach* webpage (<https://swana.org/Safety/HaulerOutreach.aspx>) to find materials that can be shared with your fellow employees or other solid waste workers visiting your facility—and encourage you to take another step (or the first step) by taking their Safety Pledge (<https://swana.org/Safety/HaulerOutreach.aspx#safetyPledge>). The pledge is simple but is a signal to everyone that safety matters to you and that you are going to do all you can to keep yourself and those around you safe.

*“I pledge to help everyone get home safe every single day. I will consider worker, customer, and public safety in every decision that I make.*

*My ultimate mission is to serve the community safely for myself, my company, and those who depend on me. If I cannot do it safely, then I will not do it at all.”*

This is a small but not insignificant step for all of us to take together to commit to reducing risks and risky behaviors around us so we can get solid waste off that top 10 list of most dangerous jobs in the U.S.

Remember—safety is a team sport and we are all in this together! **Dennis Batts - Safety Chair**

# Member’s Corner

SWANA members having fun, getting back to nature!

Clarke Gibson, Tim Torrez, Jeff Crate, and John Barnes hiking at MacAfee Knob, one of the most photographed spot on the AT (left); The Priest and Three Ridges, one of the most difficult sections in VA (center), and Mount Rogers the highest peak in VA at elevation 5728’ (right).



# Industry Trends: Uncertain Times for Solid Waste Agencies

We are living in uncertain times and there are tough decisions ahead for solid waste agencies. This article summarizes current market conditions for recyclables in the U.S. in the era of the post-Chinese import ban, which went into effect on 1 January 2018, and suggests some short- and long-term solutions. **Marc Rogoff, Jeremy Morris and Bill Gaffigan**

For years, one of the most visible ways that Americans actively contributed to environmental sustainability and resource conservation has been through recycling materials such as paper, cardboard, plastics and metal. However, much of this material is exported to China where it is used as raw material to make new products. In recent years, China has been the single largest worldwide importer of post-consumer recyclables, consuming more than 50 percent of the world's recycled paper and plastic and almost 30 percent of all recyclables collected in the U.S.

## What Has Happened?

One of the drawbacks of reusing recycled material is managing contamination (i.e., waste residue such as liquid dregs in bottles or food stuck to cardboard packaging). In some cases, 10 to 20 percent of the weight of recyclables being shipped to China was unusable waste. In July 2017, China notified the World Trade Organization that effective January 2018 it would ban imports of some recycled materials, including mixed paper and most plastics. In March 2018, China went further and implemented a strict new policy limiting contamination levels to 0.5 percent, a near-impossible limit for most single-stream recycling programs. To ensure compliance, Chinese customs have implemented the Blue Sky 2018 program to inspect every container entering any Chinese port and reject and return all containers with more than 0.5 percent contamination. As a result, inspections are meticulous at the point of origin and mill buyers will not purchase any loads with more than 0.5 percent contamination. Some in the recycling industry have opined that China appears to be on a path to eliminate imports of all post-consumer recyclables by 2021.

## What Are the Impacts of China's New Policies on U.S. Recycling?

The loss of the Chinese market has disrupted an entire global commodity industry, throwing the global recycling industry into turmoil as commodity prices crashed. U.S. exports of mixed paper to China fell by 95 percent in 2018. Only half of materials formerly shipped to China have found alternative end markets. This has reduced revenues as some materials must be sold at significantly lower prices, sometimes even at a loss. Some material cannot be sold even at a loss and must be landfilled. As a result, recycling revenues are significantly depressed. **Figure 1, shown below,** shows that the national average price paid for a ton of mixed paper varied from late 2016 to March 2018, when the 0.5 percent contamination limit took effect.

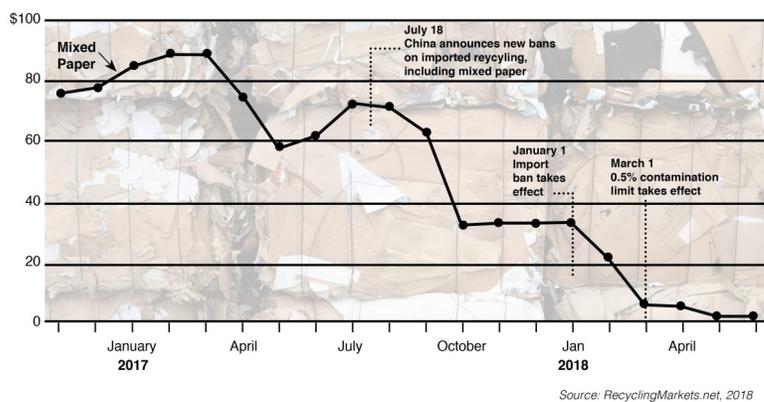


Figure 1, shown below, shows that the national average price paid for a ton of mixed paper varied from late 2016 to March 2018, when the 0.5 percent contamination limit took effect.

The impacts of the import ban first appeared in the Pacific Northwest and Alaska, with several solid waste agencies requesting exemptions from state recycling mandates and landfill bans. During the first quarter of 2018, landfilling of recyclables also began in California. Some agencies like Sacramento County have reported that they will be expending much more effort on education and contamination enforcement. The new market realities have severely

impacted the County's recycling budget, with recycled commodities switching from about \$1.2 million in annual revenue to \$1.1 million in expenses. There are reports from several northeastern and mid-Atlantic states of "orphaned" stockpiles of recyclables.

Will China eventually relax their standards and reopen their market for imports? Although no one can predict what China will do, signs indicate that the events of the past year represent a paradigm shift regarding how recyclables will be managed going forward. The China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development (CCICED) recently released a paper stating that a further stop to material imports will be in place by 2019. China's government is, justifiably, concerned about their environment, and has given clear signals of their intent to eliminate the importation of waste for the sake of raw materials. This suggests that China's recycling restrictions are here.

## **China's Recycling Import Ban: Uncertain Times for Solid Waste Agencies (Continued from Page 3)**

While it is anticipated that new markets will eventually develop, the timeline for new market development is highly uncertain due to its dependence on establishing new facilities and infrastructure either in the U.S. or overseas. In the meantime, recyclers have already reacted by slowing down processing lines, adding labor and high-tech equipment at sorting facilities to remove contamination, which adds operational cost. Many are focused on “core recyclables” such as clean cardboard and paper, HDPE and PET plastic bottles, and aluminum cans. Many state and local agencies such as Oregon's Department of Environmental Quality have published statements to make residents aware of the difficulties and urging residents to focus on core recyclables and avoid “wishful recycling.”

### **Possible Solutions**

Our recycling industry is facing an unprecedented turn of events as a result of policy changes halfway across the world. Recyclers are adapting as quickly as they can but there is no expectation of a return to the old status quo. Over time, help must come from the public in the form of cleaner materials; from regulators by allowing variances from recycling goals; from municipalities by working with their recyclers to understand the options for retaining sustainable programs for the short and longer term. All this and more will be necessary to ensure the future of recycling as a key community service. In the interim, solid waste agencies will be forced to take steps at the local level to mitigate the current recyclables markets conditions. These could include some of the following solutions:

- *Take Steps to Reduce Contamination*—Local agencies can deploy waste audits to help identify areas in their service area where high levels of contamination continue to exist. A good source of information is joint advisory issued by the Solid Waste Association of North America (SWANA) and the National Waste and Recycling Association (NWRA). Legislation can be enacted to address recyclables contamination; for example, a recent bill in Florida will require municipalities to address material contamination in curbside recycling programs. As written, the bill establishes that solid waste agencies and not haulers or MRFs are responsible for reducing contamination.
- *Implement Recycling Education Programs*—Education is critical to the sustainability of recycling programs. A good rule of thumb is to spend \$1 per household per year to maintain strong participation. For a programmatic change (e.g., switching from single to dual stream collection), add another \$2 to \$3 per household to cover a marketing campaign. A strong campaign will decrease resident confusion, lessen contamination and disposal expenses, increase quality and quantity of recovered materials, and maximize use of recycling system capacity. Production ready examples of campaign materials are available from SWANA, NWRA and other local solid waste agencies. Teams of communications specialists can help design a campaign.
- *Conduct Pro Active Financial Planning*—Many agencies have not developed long-term financial plans for recycling programs and have not set aside reserves or “rainy day” funds, despite recycling markets having shown significant variability due to a variety of global and local economic issues. Developing a long-term financial strategy can help mitigate these fluctuations. Solid waste advisory specialists have unrivaled expertise in objectively reviewing, analyzing, and measuring financial performance and comparing them to industry benchmarks using custom financial models.

### **State and Federal Support**

At the state and federal levels several concrete policy changes will need to be implemented, including:

- *Change in Tax Policies*—Currently, the Federal Tax Code provides significant financial advantages to manufacturers of virgin materials through investment tax credits, advanced depreciation write-offs and the like. These reduce the price of virgin materials. Changes in tax policy should be examined to “level the playing field” for recycled materials.
- *Producer Responsibility*—Extended producer responsibility (EPR) is a strategy designed to promote the integration of lifecycle disposal/recycling and other environmental costs in the market price of a product. EPR is based upon the principle that because producers (usually brand owners) have the greatest control over product design and packaging, they have the greatest ability and responsibility to reduce toxicity and waste. British Columbia has piloted a novel EPR program in recent years which has transferred the cost of recycling programs from local government to manufacturers and their trade associations.
- *Infrastructure Investment Program*—SWANA and other solid waste organizations have argued that solid waste should be included in a comprehensive national infrastructure program. There are plans to include solid waste and recycling in a plan to improve public works funding and infrastructure development.

## **China's Recycling Import Ban: Uncertain Times for Solid Waste Agencies (Continued from Page 4)**

### **A Larger Policy**

The far-reaching impacts of the China import ban have likely not yet played out fully. The current policy by China is part of a larger policy to improve environmental quality for an increasing middle class as well as ongoing trade negotiations with the U.S. However, some conclusions can be drawn at this juncture:

- The Chinese import ban was unexpected and represents a major disruption to the management of recycles in the U.S.
- There has always been—and always will be—pricing volatility in the recycling market; however, the current severely depressed market conditions in the U.S. are expected to persist for at least several years.
- Increased investment in recycling infrastructure and markets will have to be made to improve quality and develop local demand for recycled products.
- Much of the cost for recycling will have to be paid by residents and businesses in the form of higher fees for service.
- Communities will pay more when they have higher levels of contamination in their recycled materials.

Authorities and municipalities are expanding services to stakeholders—doing more with less, while maintaining high standards for safety and environmental compliance. A solid waste advisory team is a trusted resource to successfully meet these challenges. They can help to provide comprehensive solid waste advisory and engineering plan for your organization.

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## **2019 SWANA Scholarship Information**

**T**he SWANA Old Dominion Chapter has rewarded numerous young men and women with scholarship awards over the years and we will continue the tradition again this year. Chapter scholarship awards are made available for graduating high school seniors among children and grandchildren of chapter members. Qualifying college and graduate student awards are also available.

Additionally, one-chapter winner may be selected for consideration of SWANA International Scholarship award. Applications and all supporting documentation are due by **May 1, 2019** to Clarke W. Gibson, SWANA Scholarships Committee Chair, 361 Livestock Road, Rustburg, Virginia 24588. Hard copy applications are required. Late applications are unable to be accepted so please allow adequate time for mail processing. Contact Clarke W. Gibson, Scholarship/Awards Committee Chair, at [cgibson@region2000.org](mailto:cgibson@region2000.org) or call (434)455-6079 for additional information.

For additional information, see: <https://swana.org/News/NewsDetail.aspx?nc=368>

For the 2018 application and complete details, see: <https://swana.org/Awards/ScholarshipsInternships.aspx>

# New Members - SWANA Old Dominion Chapter

The SWANA - Old Dominion Chapter would like to welcome the following new members:

- ◆ Corinne Rico, GBB
- ◆ Loren Kato, Spotsylvania County
- ◆ Phillip McKalips, Rivanna SWA
- ◆ Uday Raval, Synergy Biofuels
- ◆ Zandy Amor, City of Hampton
- ◆ John Hixon, City of VA Beach
- ◆ Ross Smith, Spotsylvania County

## SWANA Webinars

### SWANA Virginia Chapter Webinar Program!

The SWANA Virginia Old Dominion Chapter is excited to announce that our chapter is now a member of the [SWANA Chapter Webinar Program](#). This allows Chapter members to attend SWANA Webinars with no out-of-pocket cost. The registration fee has already been paid for by the Old Dominion Chapter. Webinars also offer CEUs.

List of Upcoming Webinars: <https://swana.org/Training/SWANAOnline/Webinars.aspx>

#### To Register:

Chapter Webinar Program participants can register for webinars online at [SWANA.org](#). Enter the Chapter's Debit Card Code at the time of registration. Code: **VA170502**

You must be a current Virginia Chapter member and logged in under your credentials on SWANA.org in order for the Debit Card Code to work. Please use these credits responsibly as the Chapter must pay for each registration made.

If you have any issues during registration, please contact **Jesse Maxwell** at 240-494-2237 or at [jmaxwell@swana.org](mailto:jmaxwell@swana.org).

## 2018 Board Information

#### Board Officers:

- ◆ President - John Barnes, City of Virginia Beach
- ◆ Vice President - Benjamin Loveday, Spotsylvania County
- ◆ Treasurer - Kim Hynes, CVWMA
- ◆ Secretary - Aaron White, HDR
- ◆ International Board Member - Ray McGowan, Waste Management
- ◆ Past President - Pete Carrico, SCS Engineers

#### Committee Chairman:

- ◆ Awards/Scholarships - C. Gibson
- ◆ Communications - J. Clary
- ◆ Conference Program - B. Loveday
- ◆ Legislative - T. Torrez
- ◆ Membership - J. Kellas
- ◆ Technical - S. Geissler
- ◆ Training - M. Lawless
- ◆ Safety - D. Batts
- ◆ YP - N. Guarriello

#### Board Members:

- ◆ Vacancy
- ◆ Jon Clary, P.E., Henrico County
- ◆ Mike Lawless, P.G., Draper Aden Associates
- ◆ Clark Gibson, P.E., Region 2000
- ◆ John Kellas, Fairfax County
- ◆ Steve Geissler, VPPSA
- ◆ Timothy Torrez, P.E., Republic Services
- ◆ Aaron White, P.G., HDR
- ◆ Henry Strickland, SPSA
- ◆ Leslie Beckwith, VA DEQ, Ex Officio Member

#### Administrative Assistant:

- ◆ Erica Trout