

Waste Management & Recycling Update

Monday, October 3rd, 2022

A large, overflowing pile of municipal waste, including plastic bags, cardboard boxes, and other debris, is shown in the foreground. In the background, there is a large, dark industrial building, likely a transfer station. The sky is clear and blue, and a few birds are visible flying in the distance. The overall scene depicts a significant waste management crisis.

Connecticut's Waste & Recycling Crisis

Pictured: Municipal waste backlog at Danbury's regional transfer station due to unplanned maintenance shutdown of Wheelabrator WTE plant, July 2021

CT's Growing Waste Crisis

- ▶ Once a national leader in Waste-To-Energy incineration, Connecticut's oldest 1980's era WTE plants are aging out.
- ▶ MIRA plant (Hartford) closed permanently in 2022, eliminating 720,000 tons of annual WTE capacity, one-third of total state capacity.
- ▶ Excess MSW now shipped to out-of-state landfills, contrary to DEEP material management plan.
- ▶ Landfilling and shipping costs have caused disposal fees to skyrocket.
- ▶ Darien example:
 - ▶ MSW tipping fee 2021: \$98 per ton
 - ▶ MSW tipping fee 2023: \$120 - \$150 per ton (projected)

National Recycling Crisis

- ▶ Single stream recycling introduced in 1990's
- ▶ Effective at increasing recycling rates but suffers from high contamination levels, which reduces resale value.
- ▶ Most recycling materials had been shipped overseas for processing.
- ▶ China's "***Operation National Sword***" environmental policy (2017) - stopped all inbound recyclables from US.

“China Sword” Effect on Municipal Budgets

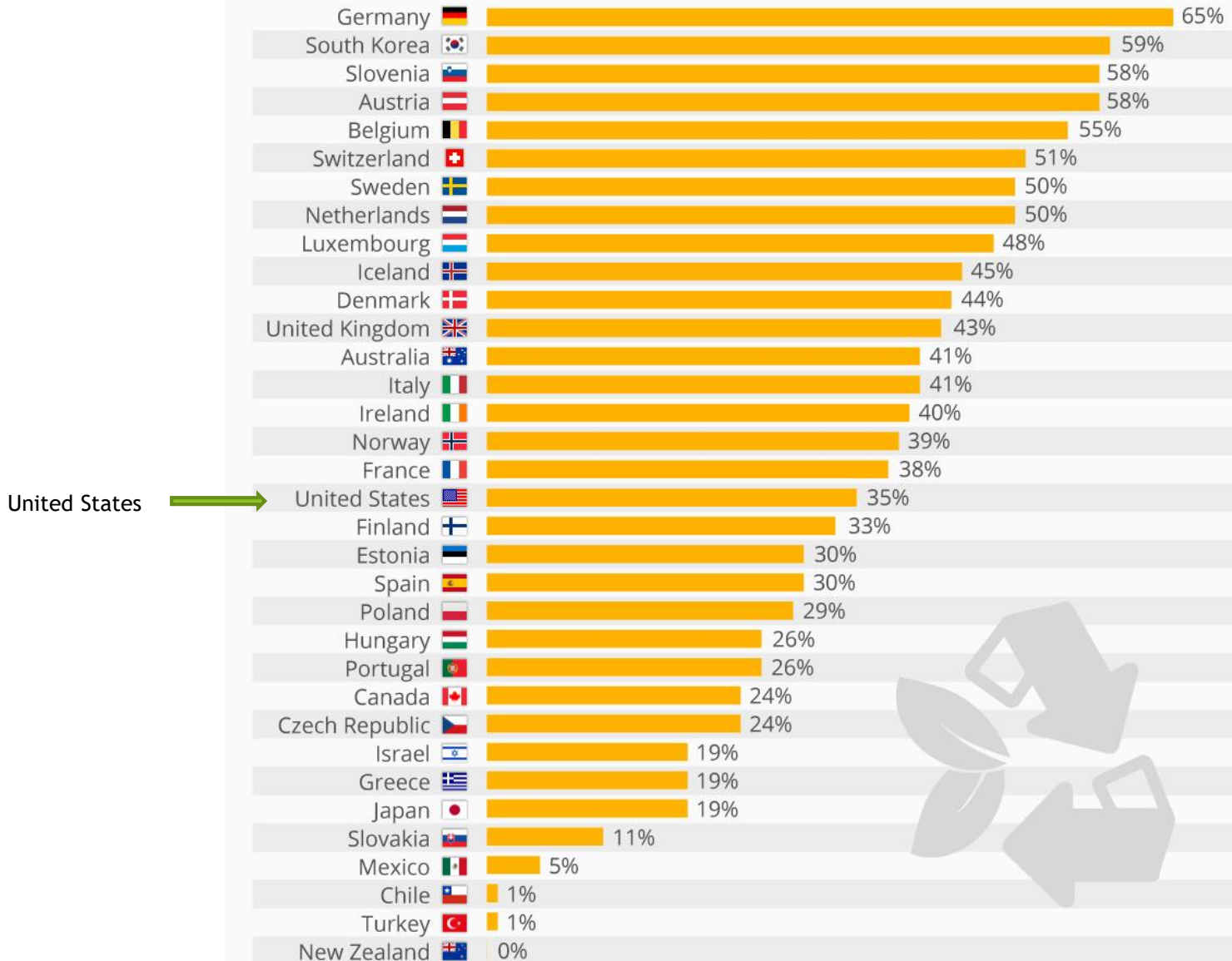
- ▶ Prior to China Sword, many municipalities operated recycling centers at a net profit, offsetting the cost of MSW disposal.
- ▶ Example: City of Bridgeport, CT - Change in net revenues from sale of recyclables:
 - ▶ Prior to China Sword: \$130,000 per year profit
 - ▶ *After China Sword: -\$400,000 direct cost to taxpayers*

Addressing the Challenges

- ▶ Up to one third of all MSW could be recycled.
- ▶ Need for public policy initiatives to reduce waste and increase recycling.
- ▶ The US recycling rates trail most OECD nations.
- ▶ Lack of national policy puts the burden on industry, state & municipal governments to find solutions.

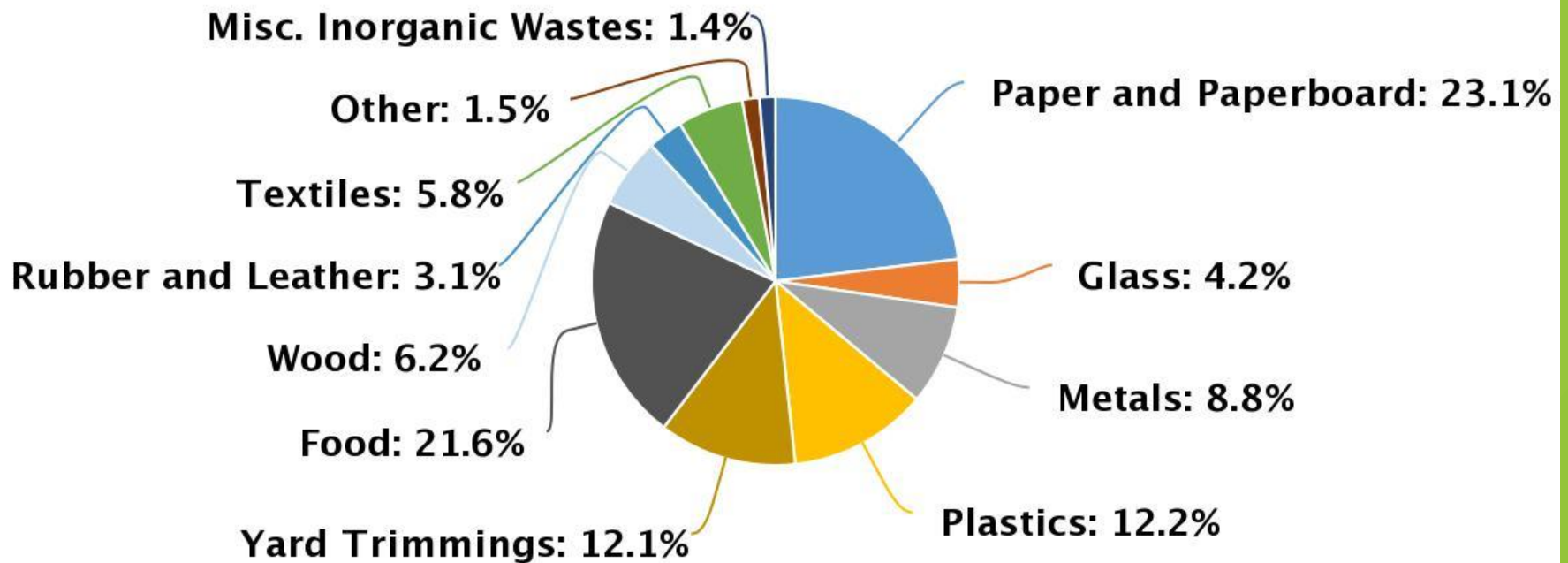
The Countries Winning The Recycling Race

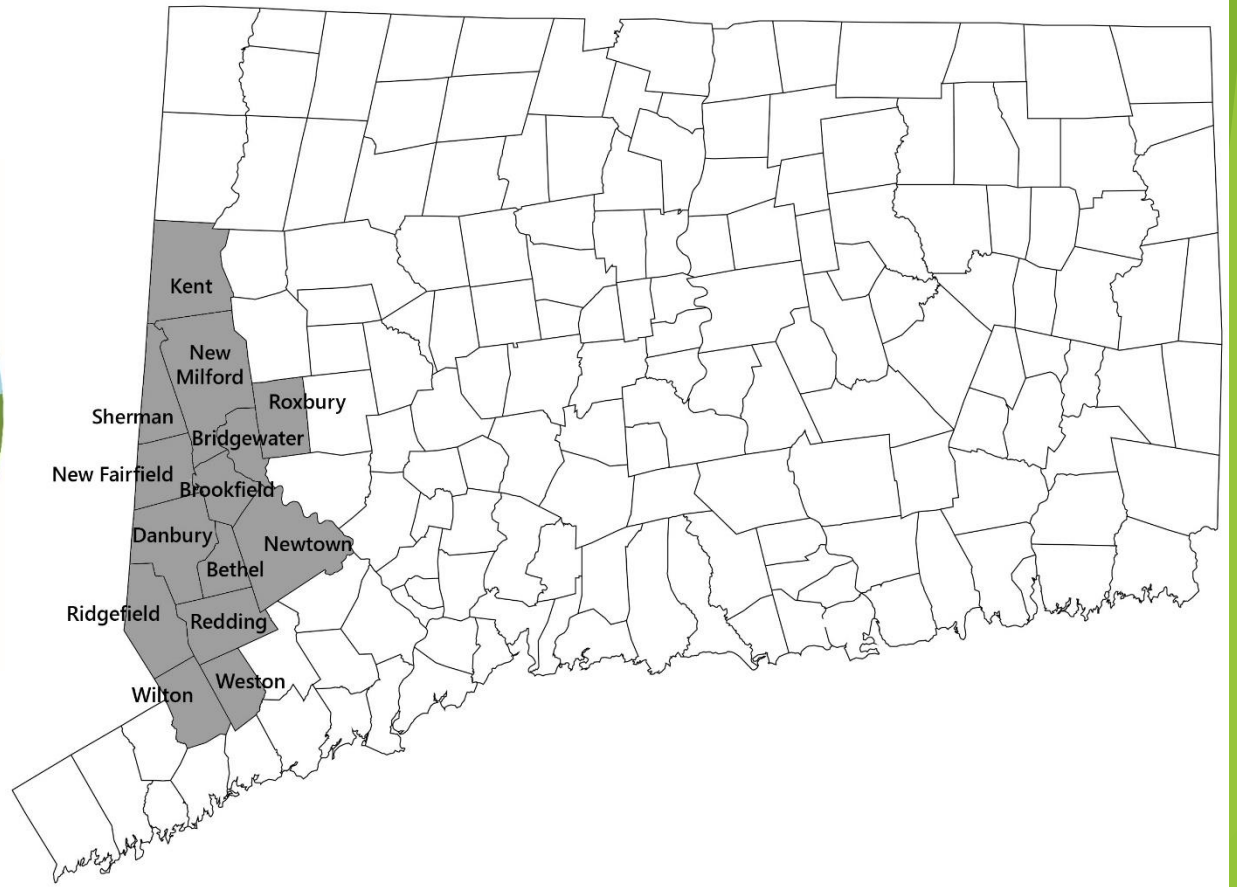
Recycled & composted waste as a share of total municipal waste in OECD countries (2013)



Total MSW Generated by Material, 2018

292.4 million tons





Housatonic Resources Recovery Authority

Regional, governmental, waste management and recycling authority
serving 14 municipalities in Western Connecticut

HRRA Supports Member Towns

- ▶ Negotiates for lowest possible tipping fees.
- ▶ Support materials: “What’s In - What’s Out”
- ▶ Educational programs for area public schools
- ▶ Annual Household Hazardous Waste events.
- ▶ Seminars at local libraries on composting, effective recycling, reducing waste, etc.

HRRA EPR Programs

- ▶ Paint Care program
- ▶ Mattress recycling program
- ▶ Electronics recycling program
- ▶ Textile recycling
- ▶ Food scrap/composting (pilot)
- ▶ Glass separation & collection (pilot)



CCSMM

**CT Coalition for Sustainable
Materials Management**

- CCSMM was formed in 2019 by DEEP Commissioner Katie Dykes.
- *Mission:* To work proactively with lawmakers and DEEP knowledge experts in developing and advancing solutions to Connecticut's MSW and recycling challenges.
- Support legislative initiatives that address long range goals for sustainable waste management and recycling.
- CCSMM now has over 100 active member municipalities.



Legislative Successes

- Bottle Bill (2021)
 - *Increase bottle deposit to 10¢*
 - *Includes wine, sports drinks, bottled water*
 - *Incentives for new redemption centers*
 - *5¢ fee on alcohol “minis” rebated to municipality*
- EPR for gas cylinders (2022)

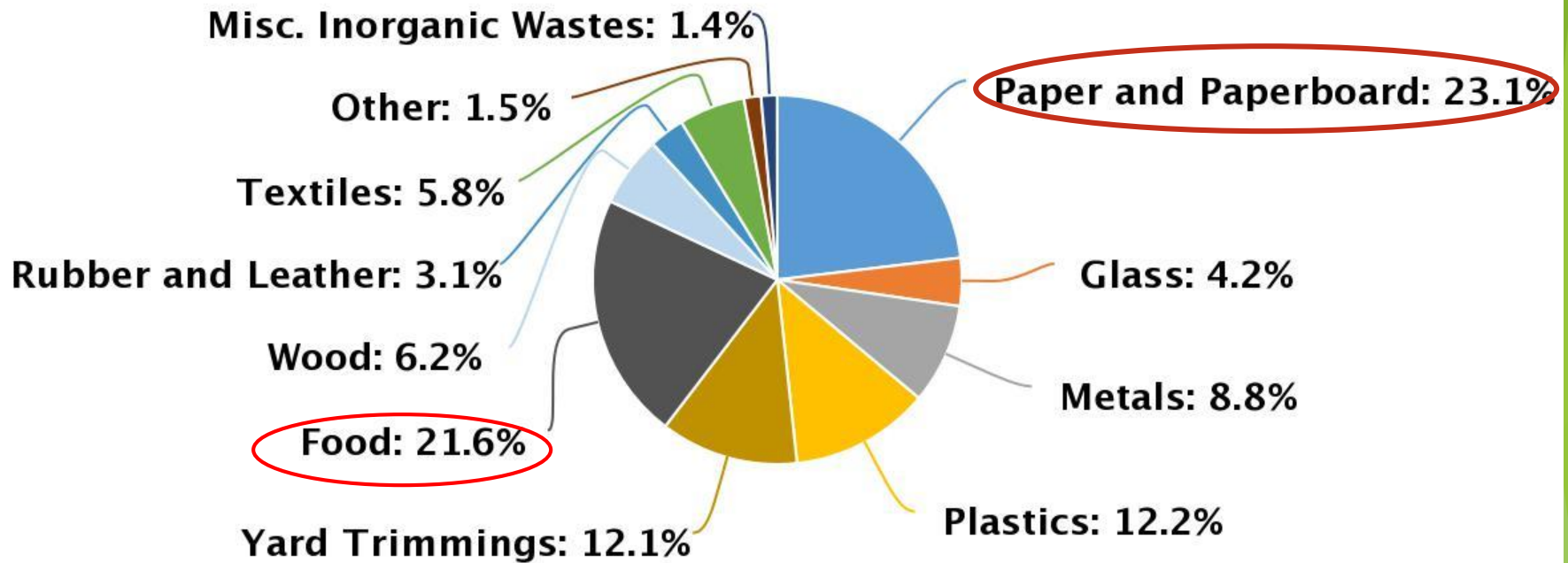


Current CCSMM Working Groups

- Enhanced Producer Responsibility (EPR).
- Increasing recycling rates.
- Promoting food scraps/organics/composting efforts.
- “Pay-As-You Throw” policy legislation.

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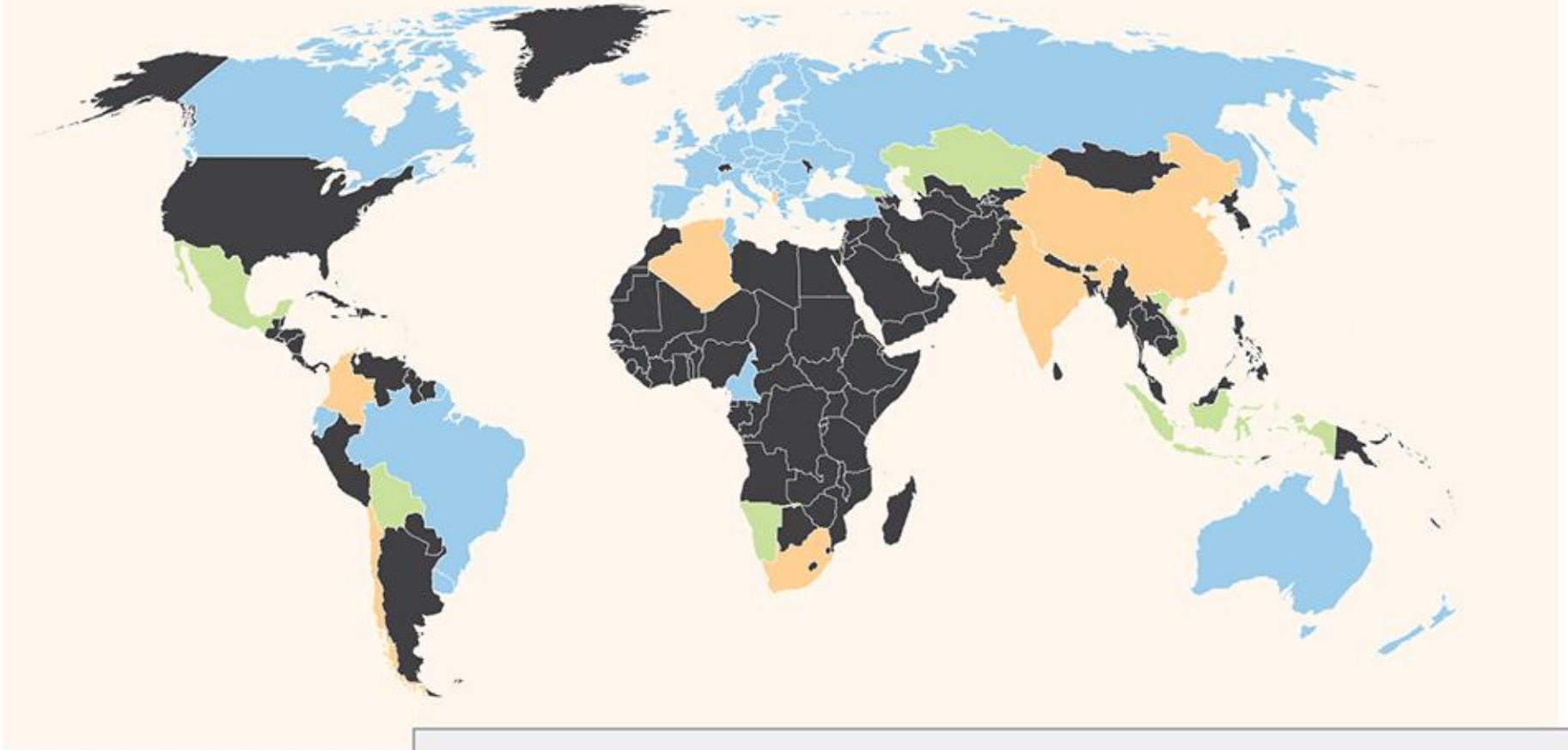
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Legislative Agenda - 2023 Session

- **Expand EPR programs:**
 - Packaging*
 - Tires*
 - Smoke alarms*
- **Pay-As-You Throw Legislation:**
 - Can reduce MSW by up to 60%*
- **Minimum Recycled Content Legislation:**
 - Increases the value and ROI of recycling markets*

Packaging EPR in 2018



 In effect (mandatory and voluntary)

 In implementation (law passed but not yet in effect)

 Framework EPR legislation in place

Wilton Transfer Station: Future Plans

- ▶ Currently processes appx. 3,000 tons of MSW per year.
- ▶ Opportunities expand EPR program offerings.
- ▶ Exploring regional collaboration to reduce costs.
- ▶ Exploring feasibility of food scrap program.

Thank you!