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Advocacy Position Statement

Integrated Solid Waste Management Systems

Statement of Purpose

The American Public Works Association (APWA) seeks to inform elected officials, regulators, policy-makers and decision-makers and the public at-large of its stated position on integrated solid waste management systems.

Statement of Position

APWA supports Integrated Solid Waste Management (ISWM) to meet waste abatement goals. The Association supports the development of programs, services and facilities aimed at reducing reliance on landfills, while allowing for the systematic redirection of waste streams through the development of Integrated Solid Waste Management Systems.

Background and Rationale

The mounting concerns over hazardous characteristics of solid wastes have dictated a different means of management aimed at protecting the health, safety and well-being of the public. The growing concern for the depletion of material resources and the need for safeguarding the environment dictate the adoption of sound collection and management practices emphasizing resource recovery and conservation as well as efficient service delivery.

Integrated Solid Waste Management (ISWM) meets abatement goals by utilizing technologies like recycling, composting, resource recovery (waste-to-energy, thermal conversion, etc.) and landfilling. ISWM assumes that more than one program or technology is, or will be, useful in managing solid waste. ISWM systems include alternatives but recognize that some wastes are most appropriately managed via landfilling.

ISWM involves the development of processing and disposal options, and considers the economic and political requirements of waste management. To implement ISWM across the nation, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency established a hierarchy of preferred solid waste management technologies. Many similar state and local guidelines

or mandates can be found in state waste management acts. Most ISWM hierarchies include the following:

- waste reduction at the source,
- recycling and reuse,
- resource recovery, and
- the use of landfills.

One additional component of the ISWM system that is often not within the breadth of local communities is product stewardship. Product stewardship involves the manufacturer of products and places responsibility on the manufacturer to include end of life disposal options into the product design. This includes recycled content use, ease of recycling the product after its useful life as well as ISWM considerations for product maintenance. Product stewardship can be enhanced by local communities through the procurement of recycled content materials as part of their standard procurement protocols.

APWA supports ISWM as the most appropriate method of achieving waste abatement goals.

Sponsor
Solid Waste Management Committee