



League of Women Voters®

Massachusetts

Action Alert! Back the Bans!



Graphic and caption provided by Clean Water Action.

Why waste bans?

Ninety percent of what households, businesses and institutions put in the garbage could be reused, recycled or composted.

There's an important policy change on the horizon from the [Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection](#) (MassDEP) that needs our support. This change will conserve resources and cut disposal costs by keeping easily-recyclable materials (paper, cardboard, bottles, cans, etc.) from being burned or buried by enforcing [existing Waste Bans](#).

The [list](#) of items banned from landfills and incinerators has been growing since the 1990s, but this regulation has rarely been enforced at disposal facilities. Once again, LWVMA has joined forces with other organizations to advocate for strong enforcement of MassDEP waste bans guidelines.

MassDEP has responded by proposing stronger guidelines for inspection of garbage trucks arriving at landfills, incinerators and transfer stations. These changes would mean more resources "saved" from trash through increased recycling and composting and lower disposal costs for municipalities due to lower trash tonnage--a clear win-win for MA residents and the environment.

Waste audits have shown that 90% of what goes into our trash bags could be reused, recycled or composted. Much of that discarded material is actually banned from disposal by state law and MassDEP regulations. However, weak compliance guidelines and low enforcement are allowing these materials to be burned or buried. Reducing waste saves resources and energy, safeguards public health by reducing pollution and supports green jobs.

Send an email to MassDEP Commissioner Kenneth Kimmell asking him to strengthen waste bans enforcement (ken.kimmell@state.ma.us) or call the Commissioner's office at 617-292-5856. Click [here](#) for a list of talking points. For more information on how you can increase your personal recycling rate, go to: <http://www.mass.gov/dep/recycle/reduce/recyclin.htm>.