



Jess L. Greenwood, P.E.
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TO: Honorable County Commissioners
Scott Arneson, County Administrator

FROM: Jess L. Greenwood, P.E. – Public Works Director / County Engineer

RE: 16 April 2024 County Board Meeting – CONSENT AGENDA
Styrofoam Recycling Grant

Date: 10 April 2024

Summary

It is requested that the County Board authorize County staff to apply for a grant from the Foodservice Packaging Institute to pursue a Styrofoam densifier.

Background

The Goodhue County Recycling Center accepts and collects various recyclable products from around the County. The County has roll-off dumpsters located in various locations, which allow for people to dispose of recyclable products. Occasionally, non-recyclable products are placed in these dumpsters, which typically results in County staff transferring them to a waste facility. County staff has noted that Styrofoam is a common material that is disposed of improperly in these dumpsters.

There are several machines that can process Styrofoam into reusable material. These machines use either pressure or heat to form multiple Styrofoam materials into different shapes, such as blocks. Styrofoam blocks can then be potentially sold to private companies for use in packaging. A typical resale cost of Styrofoam is \$0.20/pound. At least one location in Wisconsin accepts densified Styrofoam.

Each year, Foodservice Packaging Institute, a national organization based in Falls Church, VA, offers grants up to \$50,000 to recycling programs or sites to support the purchase of a foam densifier, collection bins, or other equipment related to foam recycling. A typical foam densifier ranges in price from \$30,000 to \$80,000, and has an area of approximately 85 square feet. A grinder for the foam would also be needed, which would be an additional cost and require additional space.

The County has an opportunity to apply for this grant this year. Applications are due by April 22, 2024. In addition to purchasing the equipment, the County would need space in the Recycling Center to accommodate the equipment. While the Recycling Center is currently short on space, a study has been programmed for this year to determine space needs for the Center. The addition of a densifier could be accounted for in that study when it takes place.

Recommendations

It is the recommendation of staff to authorize Public Works to apply for a grant to pursue a Styrofoam densifier, which would allow the Goodhue County Recycling Center to process this material, which is currently being transferred to waste facilities.

"To effectively promote the safety, health, and well-being of our residents"

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
GOODHUE COUNTY, MINNESOTA**

16 April 2024

WHEREAS, the Goodhue County Recycling Center collects recyclable products from various areas throughout the County; and,

WHEREAS, County staff has noted an increasing amount of Styrofoam products at the Recycling Center; and,

WHEREAS, the Recycling Center currently has no way to recycle Styrofoam; and,

WHEREAS, the Foodservice Packaging Institute offers grants each year, in an amount up to \$50,000 each, to recycling programs to support the recycling and processing of foam products primarily by helping to fund the purchase of a Styrofoam densifier; and,

WHEREAS, the County has an opportunity to apply for this grant this year; and,

WHEREAS, if the grant is awarded, the County would need to purchase, house, operate, and maintain a densifier at the Recycling Center, which may require additional space; and,

WHEREAS, the County has programmed dollars to fund a study to assess space needs at the Recycling Center, which could determine the feasibility of accommodating a new densifier.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Goodhue County Board of Commissioners authorizes Public Works to apply for a grant through the Foodservice Packaging Institute to support the processing and recycling of foam products.

State of Minnesota
County of Goodhue

Flanders	Yes	___	No	___
Anderson	Yes	___	No	___
Betcher	Yes	___	No	___
Majerus	Yes	___	No	___
Greseth	Yes	___	No	___

I, Scott Arneson, duly appointed, qualified, and County Administrator of the County of Goodhue, State of Minnesota, do hereby certify that I have compared the foregoing copy of a resolution with the original minutes of the proceedings of the Board of County Commissioners, Goodhue County, Minnesota at their session held on the 16th day of April, 2024, now on file in my office, and have found the same to be a true and correct copy thereof.

Witness my hand and official seal at Red Wing, Minnesota this 16th day of April, 2024.

Scott Arneson
County Administrator