

2004-05 NYC Residential and Street Basket Waste Characterization Study

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

The publication of R.W. Beck's four-volume Final Report on the 2004-05 NYC Waste Characterization Study (WCS) completes the basic reporting activities for this large, multi-season project. The Final Report is organized as a reference tool, with results reported and summarized by season, by source of waste (or "stream"), by housing density and income group, and by material, in a variety of different combinations.

The Department of Sanitation has already begun to use the results of the WCS in practical ways. Information about the composition of the City's "metal, glass, and plastics" (MGP) stream has been used to finalize the revenue sharing and price provisions of the 20-year contract with Hugo Neu Sims. The Department's monthly diversion report has been updated to reflect information on the underlying composition of waste in each Community District, so that capture rates can be accurately calculated. Information about the presence of textiles and electronics in waste has informed the development of periodic events to collect these materials for recycling.

The ramifications of the WCS will, no doubt, go far beyond these immediate applications. The results are published not only for DSNY, but for everyone. They may be used to answer a wide array of questions. R.W. Beck's Final Report has been assembled as an exhaustive reference tool for this purpose. It presents a very large number of different tables. Readers encountering the breadth and complexity of the information may find our "Guide to the Tables" useful in navigating pages and pages of tables, and our "Results Highlights" an interesting first look at some of the most notable findings of the study. In addition, we suggest you consult our "Guide to the Tables" at the end of this document as a finding aid to help you navigate the many pages of information in the WCS Final Report.

However, it cannot be stressed enough that the WCS presents no single bottom line finding. The value of the WCS lies in the broad and unanticipated range of questions it is designed to answer. In this way it is like a census of waste. The findings summarized in the Department's own "Results Highlights" are by no means exhaustive. We therefore encourage readers to pose their own questions of the data we offer, and draw their own conclusions. The WCS is a work of science, describing an important and fascinating aspect of the natural and social world around us: what we throw out. We are pleased to share this information with you.

Robert Lange, Director
Bureau of Waste Prevention, Reuse and Recycling
New York City Department of Sanitation



The information herein has been compiled, analyzed, and reported by the DSNY Bureau of Waste Prevention, Reuse and Recycling, using data collected by its consultant R.W. Beck. These highlights do not substitute for a thorough review of R.W. Beck's Final Report, which contains more detailed data. Some percentages may not total exactly due to rounding.

page intentionally left blank

The information herein has been compiled, analyzed, and reported by the DSNY Bureau of Waste Prevention, Reuse and Recycling, using data collected by its consultant R.W. Beck. These highlights do not substitute for a thorough review of R.W. Beck's Final Report, which contains more detailed data. Some percentages may not total exactly due to rounding.