

Talking... TRASH

The Newsletter of the SWANA Florida Sunshine Chapter

Spring 2026



Hosted by Lee County Solid Waste

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Letter from the President

March 2026

2026 has been a year of tremendous change and at times, uncertainty. Solid waste management continues to evolve quickly, shaped by shifting markets, new regulations, changing labor dynamics, fuel price fluctuations, and broader socioeconomic and geopolitical forces. While these pressures present challenges, they also inspire new ideas and highlight the resilience that defines our industry. Market conditions influenced by population growth, demand patterns, and commodity values have required us to remain flexible and forward-looking. Even with these shifts, our teams have shown remarkable adaptability. Their efforts to improve contamination control, strengthen partnerships, and enhance operational efficiency continue to keep materials moving responsibly and reliably.

The regulatory landscape is also advancing, particularly with new expectations related to air pollution control and water quality. These developments reflect a growing commitment to environmental stewardship at the local level. By staying engaged, informed, and proactive, we are positioning ourselves not only to meet these new requirements but to lead with solutions that elevate our entire sector. Our labor force remains one of our greatest strengths. Despite nationwide workforce shortages and increased competition for skilled employees, we continue to see exceptional dedication from the individuals who keep daily operations running safely and consistently. Ongoing investments in employee development, retention, and workplace culture remain essential. Yet even in these unpredictable conditions, we have taken meaningful steps to manage

costs and maintain high-quality service for our customers including route optimization, exploring alternative fuels, modernizing fleets, and leveraging new technologies all help reduce exposure to volatility while supporting long-term sustainability goals showcasing the hallmarks of our industry's resiliency.

Through all this change, one constant remains: our shared commitment to service, innovation, and environmental responsibility. As we move into the summer months, our collective dedication will continue driving the progress that strengthens our communities and our profession. The SWANA Florida Chapter continues to be dedicated to our members and the industry to provide the connections, insights, and information needed to stay updated and prepared to meet the challenges ahead through our communications like the Talking Trash Newsletter and our events. We will soon have the opportunity to showcase the extraordinary skills of our frontline drivers and equipment operators at the 2026 SWANA FL Chapter Road-E-O on April 25th in Fort Myers. I also look forward to gathering again in Orlando at the Signia Hilton Bonnet Creek from July 19 to 21 for the SWANA FL Summer Conference. These events give us valuable time to connect, learn from one another, and continue discussing how we are facing and overcoming our challenges together. Thank you for the work you do each day and for the positivity you bring to the challenges and opportunities we face every day.

Sincerely,

Jason Timmons
SWANA FL President

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Population Growth Is Reshaping Municipal Waste Collection in Florida

Justin Lyles

Florida's rapid population growth is creating new challenges for municipal solid waste departments. As communities expand and new neighborhoods come online, sanitation teams are being asked to serve more residents, cover longer routes, and handle higher waste volumes—all while working within the same operational and budget constraints.

Florida's Population Boom Is Driving Service Demand

According to the *U.S. News & World Report*, Florida ranks as the fastest-growing state in the United States based on percentage growth since 2020, with the population increasing more than 8% to over 23 million residents.

For municipal waste departments, this growth translates directly into operational pressure. Every new subdivision means additional stops on collection routes. As housing density increases, routes become longer, truck use rises, and daily tonnage grows. In many cases, municipalities must add entirely new routes simply to maintain the level of service residents expect. However, while service demand can increase quickly, expanding operational capacity often cannot.

The Challenge of Expanding a Municipal Fleet

Garbage trucks represent one of the largest capital purchases within a public works fleet, often ranging from \$300,000 to \$500,000 per vehicle depending on the configuration.

For municipalities balancing priorities such as infrastructure, public safety,

and utilities, adding multiple trucks to a capital plan can be difficult. Even when funding is approved,



Front loader

procurement timelines can create additional challenges. Manufacturing lead times for refuse trucks can stretch months or longer, leaving municipalities with a gap between



Side loader

recognizing increased service demand and receiving new equipment.

At the same time, aging vehicles and unexpected mechanical issues can create operational disruptions. When a truck goes down mid-route, sanitation

departments are faced with the kind of “oh no” moment that every public works leader wants to avoid—missed collections, overtime costs, and frustrated residents.

Operational Reliability Matters

Waste collection is one of the most visible services municipalities provide. Residents expect their trash to be collected on schedule, every time. When routes are disrupted due to equipment failures or capacity shortages, the impacts are felt immediately throughout the community.

Maintaining fleet reliability is therefore essential not just for operations, but for public trust. Reliable equipment helps sanitation teams guarantee service, keep routes on schedule, and ensure neighborhoods remain clean and well-maintained.

Having access to additional trucks when needed can help municipalities avoid service disruptions altogether.

Whether covering a vehicle that is down for maintenance or supporting additional routes, supplemental capacity allows departments to maintain continuity and keep collections running as planned.

A Flexible Strategy for Growing Communities

To address both growth and reliability challenges, many municipalities are turning to fleet rental as a supplemental strategy. While rentals have historically been used for short-term breakdown coverage,

they are increasingly being used to support expanding routes and provide additional operational capacity.

Rental trucks allow municipalities to deploy vehicles quickly when new neighborhoods are developed or when

route volumes increase. This flexibility helps sanitation departments keep up with demand without waiting through long procurement cycles.

In addition, rentals can help create more predictable operating expenses. Instead of absorbing unexpected repair costs on aging trucks, municipalities can rely on vehicles that are ready to operate when needed. This helps reduce the financial volatility associated with major repairs while improving overall fleet reliability.



Grapple truck.

Keeping Communities Clean While Managing Growth

Population growth will likely remain one of the defining trends shaping municipal waste collection in Florida. As communities expand, sanitation departments must balance the need for reliable service with the realities of fleet management and budget constraints.

By supplementing their fleets with flexible solutions, many municipalities are finding ways to deploy trucks quickly, maintain operational reliability, and ensure waste collection continues without disruption. In fast-growing communities, this approach helps departments keep routes running smoothly, protects their budgets, and most importantly, keeps their communities clean.

Major Themes and Takeaways

As Florida's population continues to grow and service demand expands, municipal waste departments are being asked to do more with the resources they have. Several key operational priorities are emerging as communities adapt their waste collection strategies.

Reduced Downtime and More Reliable Collection

Reliable equipment plays a critical role in keeping collection routes on schedule. Minimizing downtime helps sanitation teams maintain consistent service and avoid missed pickups that can impact residents.

Flexibility to Match Service Demand

Population growth, new housing developments, and seasonal changes can all increase waste volumes. Flexible fleet strategies allow municipalities to scale operations more easily as service needs evolve.

Predictable Budgets to Protect Service Levels

Unexpected repairs and aging fleet equipment can introduce financial uncertainty. Strategies that help stabilize operating expenses allow departments to better plan budgets while maintaining consistent service for residents.

Allow Staff to Focus on Collection, Not Repairs

When equipment reliability improves, sanitation teams can focus their time and energy on the core mission of waste collection and community cleanliness rather than dealing with frequent mechanical disruptions.

Justin Lyles is Director of Marketing and Communications for BTR (Big Truck Rental). For more information, call (813) 261-0820 or e-mail BTRsales@bigtruckrental.com.

Advertising Opportunities Available

It's not too late to reserve a space in the Summer Talking Trash.

Job Openings

Post an employment notice on the SWANA FL website and in the YP newsletter for FREE!

Email info@swanafl.org or visit www.swanafl.org for more information.

From Treatment Plants to Tallahassee: Biosolids Policy Takes Center Stage

Tobin McKnight, PE, BCEE and Kelly Flowers Hass, MBA, MS, MA, JM

Florida’s policies governing biosolids management are evolving as lawmakers and regulators respond to concerns about nutrient management, land application practices, and emerging contaminants such as PFAS. Several bills passed during the 2026 legislative session signal increased oversight of biosolids reuse and monitoring. Together, these changes could affect how utilities, local governments, and solid waste managers treat, track, and, ultimately, manage biosolids across the state. Here is what Florida solid waste professionals need to know about the pending rule changes and their potential implications.

Biosolids are nutrient-rich organic materials produced during domestic wastewater treatment. Nearly 2,000 wastewater facilities in Florida generate about 340,000 dry tons annually, making biosolids management a key operational, regulatory, and financial concern for utilities and local governments. Biosolids are classified by treatment level: Class B provides basic pathogen reduction with site restrictions; Class A receives higher treatment for broader use; and Class AA, the highest standard, is treated to remove detectable pathogens and is often distributed as fertilizer or soil amendments.

This legislative session, three bills affecting biosolids management and monitoring passed the Florida Legislature. All have cleared both

chambers and are now enrolled, awaiting action by Governor Ron DeSantis.

HB 1245 – Biosolids Management (2026)

House Bill 1245 increases oversight of Class AA biosolids land application and requires that biosolids used in agriculture be applied at scientifically appropriate nutrient levels. The bill prohibits applying bulk Class AA biosolids fertilizer or compost at rates



exceeding the agronomic rate, which is based on crop uptake, soil conditions, crop needs, and environmental protection.

The bill also requires enhanced record-keeping for land application sites. Operators must keep records for at least five years, documenting biosolids characteristics, transporters, quantities applied, and application locations.

Additionally, the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural

Sciences (UF/IFAS) will publish recommended agronomic application rates every two years to guide responsible biosolids reuse. The law takes effect November 1, 2026.

HB 1019 – PFAS Monitoring and Firefighting Foam Restrictions (2026)

HB 1019 primarily addresses phasing out firefighting foams containing PFAS chemicals. It also includes provisions relevant to utilities and biosolids managers.

Public wastewater facilities with flows more than 25,000 gallons per day must conduct quarterly sampling of biosolids and treated effluent for PFAS compounds, including PFOA and PFOS, and submit results to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP).

These sampling results are informational only until federal PFAS standards are established and adopted by FDEP. Until then, monitoring data may not be the basis for enforcement action or other causes of action. The law takes effect July 1, 2026.

SB 290 – Class AA Biosolids Requirement (2026)

SB 290, a broader Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services bill, includes a significant biosolids provision requiring that only Class AA biosolids may be land applied in Florida by July 1, 2028. Local governments that transport biosolids outside their jurisdiction must meet the requirement by 2031.

What This Means for Florida

Together, these measures signal a continued policy shift toward higher quality biosolids treatment, improved nutrient management, and enhanced contaminant monitoring. For utilities, solid waste agencies, and biosolids managers, the legislation highlights the need for treatment upgrades, monitoring programs, and strong documentation as Florida refines its biosolids management framework.

Implications for Solid Waste Managers

As Florida moves toward stricter biosolids treatment standards and expanded monitoring requirements, utilities and biosolids generators may face increased costs and operational challenges in maintaining land application programs. In some cases, these pressures could lead to a shift away from agricultural reuse toward alternative management options,

including landfill disposal. Solid waste managers should be aware that these regulatory changes may increase demand for landfill capacity and require coordinating with wastewater utilities to plan for handling biosolids that can no longer be economically or logistically land applied. Proactive planning, infrastructure evaluation, and policy coordination will be important as Florida’s biosolids management framework continues to evolve.

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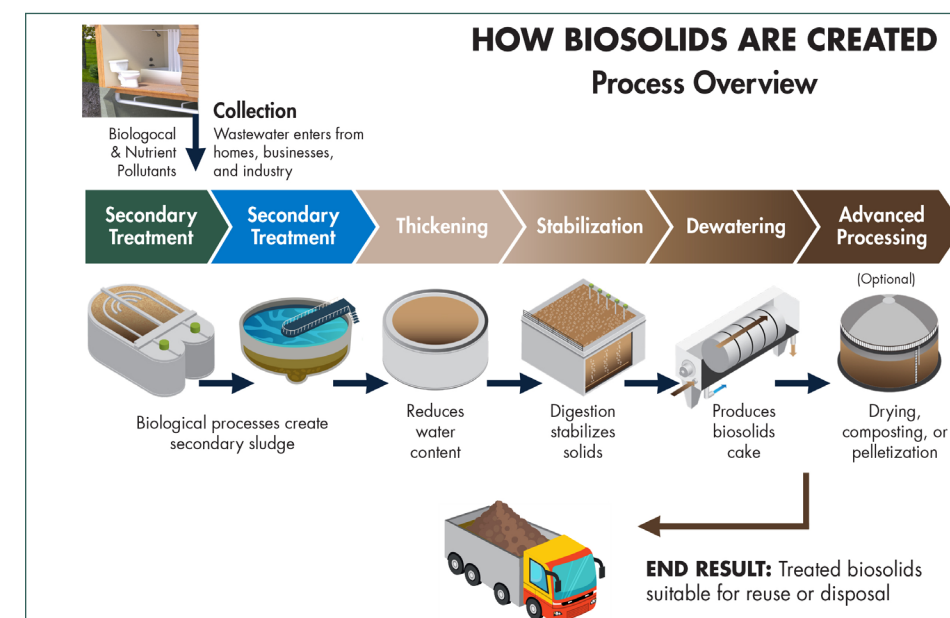
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Check Out the SWANA FL Store

Our [online store](#) provides members with the opportunity to purchase a variety of quality shirts and hats with the SWANA FL logo.



Get your apparel today and represent the chapter at your next business meeting or show your SWANA FL pride at our upcoming chapter events!



From the Last Frontier to the Sunshine State: Anchorage Explores Florida's Waste-to-Energy Excellence

Marc J. Rogoff, Ph.D.

While Florida and Alaska sit at opposite corners of the continent, the challenge of sustainable waste management knows no borders.

A Collaborative Powerhouse

The tour brought together municipal leaders and technical consultants to evaluate the feasibility of a practical, proven solution that turns everyday



The MOA delegation and technical advisory team. Left to right: Aaron Hudson (Jacobs), Kelli Toth (SWS), James Armstrong (SWS), Marc Rogoff (Geosyntec), Kasper Frohlich (Geosyntec), Sarah Nealy (Raftelis), Mark Tuma (Raftelis), and Thierry Boveri (Raftelis).

The Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) is currently deploying long-term, responsible waste management alternatives to extend the life of Alaska's only municipal landfill for generations. A delegation of Alaskan leaders and industry experts recently completed a technical tour of six of Florida's world-class Waste-to-Energy (WTE) facilities.

waste into a community resource—responsibly managing waste, delivering reliable energy, protecting air and water. The group explored the engineering and financial components required to transition Anchorage toward a more sustainable future.

The Florida Advantage

Florida remains the national gold standard for WTE, boasting the largest capacity to process municipal solid waste in the U.S. For our colleagues

from Anchorage, the Florida model highlighted several critical advantages:

- **Land Preservation:** WTE reduces waste volume sent to the landfill by up to 90%, a vital metric for Anchorage as they look to extend landfill life for the next century.
- **Environmental Resiliency:** In Florida, where a high-water table makes landfilling complex, WTE provides a secure disposal method. Similarly, Anchorage faces unique geological and climatic constraints where WTE offers a stable, year-round solution.
- **Methane and Carbon Mitigation:** By diverting organics from landfills, Florida's WTE facilities avoid more than 15 million tons of CO₂ equivalent emissions annually by preventing methane generation.
- **Baseload Renewable Power:** Florida facilities generate roughly 544 megawatts of electricity, proving that waste is a reliable energy resource.

Technical and Fiscal Takeaways

The visit provided the MOA team with an up close look of the City of Tampa, Hillsborough, Lee County, Pasco County, Pinellas County, and Solid Waste Authority of Palm Beach County Waste to Energy plants, focusing on operational excellence and

the complex economics that sustain these facilities.

The primary focus of the tour was the fiscal modeling necessary to support these significant capital investments. Working with experts from Raftelis and Geosyntec, the delegation analyzed:

- **Rate Structure and Economics:** Deep dives into how tipping fees, energy sales, and metal recovery revenues, which reclaim more than 212,000 tons of metal annually in Florida, create a balanced municipal utility fund.

- **Long-Term Funding Strategies:** Discussion on the bond structures and 30-year financial forecasting required to ensure the facility remains a community asset without undue burden on ratepayers.
- **Operational Integration:** Observing how modern facilities operate as good neighbors through advanced emissions controls, even in densely populated areas.

This visit underscores the true power of the SWANA WTE network. By

sharing our lessons learned in the Sunshine State, we are helping our peers in the Last Frontier pave a path toward a more sustainable and resilient future.

Marc J. Rogoff, Ph.D. is Senior Consultant for Geosyntec Consultants. He can be reached at mrogoff@geosyntec.com.

Photo Courtesy of Bryant Johnson, Hillsborough County Department of Solid Waste.



GEOSYNTEC'S SOLID WASTE ADVISORY EXPERIENCE

With over 30 years of service, our advisory professionals have been involved in more than 1,000 solid waste management and recycling projects for private clients as well as municipalities, local and state governments, regional authorities, and national governmental agencies. The range of professional services provided by Geosyntec includes:

- Solid waste minimization, diversion, and recycling studies
- Waste flow analysis (collection and hauling), composition, and generation studies
- Strategic planning and transactional advice
- Financial modeling, due diligence, and cost/benefit analyses for solid waste facilities
- Optimization of financial and operations management
- Design, permitting, construction, repair/maintenance, and decommissioning/closure of transfer stations, materials recovery facilities (MRFs), residents' convenience centers, waste to energy (WTE) plants, and landfills; and
- Organics collection and processing

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Case Study: Turning Landfill Gas Into Long-Term Value

Bryan Johnson

In November 2025, Waga Energy commissioned a 1,000 scfm landfill gas-to-RNG facility at the Scott Area Landfill in Iowa. While located in the Midwest, the project offers practical insights highly relevant to Florida landfill operators evaluating renewable natural gas (RNG) development.

From 450 SCFM to 800 SCFM: Wellfield Optimization Matters

At the outset of due diligence, the landfill gas flows at the Scott Area Landfill were approximately 450 scfm. Through additional well installation and targeted wellfield improvements, flows increased to 800 scfm at commissioning of the RNG facility. Landfill gas flows are expected to increase throughout the duration of the RNG project. RNG feasibility often depends less on current flows and more on strategic wellfield investment.

Wellfield investments can significantly improve the viability of an RNG project, especially when the landfill gas flow does not initially meet project requirements. Proactive gas collection upgrades can significantly improve project economics while enhancing methane capture and meeting regulatory compliance. Oftentimes, the RNG developer will work with the landfill owner to come up with a solution to maximize landfill gas collection.

Optimizing the wellfield enhances project economics, improves local air quality, reduces local emissions, and prepares the landfill for future regulation requirements.



Figure 1

Upgrading Landfill Gas into RNG is a Technological Challenge

Landfill gas composition changes over time and varies depending on a few different conditions. Different



landfill gas upgrading technologies demonstrate varying levels of sensitivity to atmospheric gases such as nitrogen and oxygen. Selecting the appropriate gas upgrading technology

is essential to managing these variations effectively.

The WAGABOX® technology is designed to handle landfill gas with elevated nitrogen levels (up to 30%) allowing continued operations and RNG injection even as landfill gas composition fluctuates. RNG technology should minimally impact landfill operations and allow for maximum and safe gas collection, even at the open face, where there will be higher amounts of air gas (nitrogen and oxygen). At the Scott Area Landfill, the nitrogen contents of the biogas at the inlet of the RNG facility is ~20% (see **Figure 1**). This [video](#) explains

the steps of the WAGABOX® process; 38 seconds in, you'll find the landfill gas intake composition.

This concept is not just in the Midwest: Florida landfills often experience high moisture content and seasonal variability. Upgrading systems that tolerate landfill gas composition variability greatly reduce operational risk, minimize local emissions, and minimize downtime.

Environmental and Market Value

The RNG facility at Scott Area is designed to produce approximately 205,000 MMBtu annually, displacing fossil fuel use in the transportation sector and avoids roughly 15,800 tons of CO₂e emissions per year.

For Florida operators, RNG projects will:

- Convert compliance-driven gas management into revenue
- Support municipal sustainability goals
- Position landfills proactively ahead of evolving methane regulations
- Provide long-term contracted revenue (RNG projects typically have a 20-year initial term)

RNG projects are not one-size-fits-all, but the underlying principles remain consistent: understand your gas resource, invest strategically in collection systems, and coordinate early with key partners. For Florida landfills, these fundamentals will continue to guide responsible methane management decisions.

For more information on developing an RNG project at your landfill, contact Bryan Johnson, Project Development Director, at Bryan.johnson@waga-energy.com.

For more information on the Scott Area Landfill 1000 SCFM project, visit the dedicated project page [here](#).

SWANA FL Scholarship Program

PURPOSE: The Florida Sunshine Chapter of SWANA hereby establishes a Scholarship Fund to assist deserving students in obtaining a post-secondary education, as long as certain requirements, as outlined below, are met.

AMOUNT OF SCHOLARSHIP: Each scholarship will be valued at \$3,000.00 per student, per school year. It will be awarded in increments of \$1,500.00 each, for two semesters, upon receipt, by the Board of Directors of the SWANA Florida Sunshine Chapter, of student status documentation. Payment will be made in the form of a check, payable to the student to be used for tuition, books, fees, school supplies and/or living expenses as needed.

NUMBER OF SCHOLARSHIPS: Two (2) scholarships will be awarded each year. One (1) scholarship will be awarded to a Florida High School senior/graduate entering post-secondary education. One (1) scholarship will be awarded to a full-time student currently enrolled at a post-secondary accredited institution of higher learning.

ELIGIBILITY: The following requirements will be considered for this scholarship:

1. Applicant shall meet at least one of the following criteria:
 - ♦ Applicant has a parent or legal guardian working in the Solid Waste industry in Florida and/or is an active SWANA Florida Chapter member; OR
 - ♦ Applicant is pursuing a degree in environmental or solid waste related fields.
2. Applicant must be a senior or former graduate of a State of Florida High School.
3. Applicant must have a minimum grade point average of 3.0, based upon on 4.0 system.
4. Applicant must be accepted as a full-time student, or a part-time student taking at least two classes, at a post-secondary accredited institution of higher learning.
5. Two letters of recommendation from persons of high regard dealing with the student's education, extracurricular or community activities must accompany application.
6. The applicant must submit a letter detailing their educational career ambitions.
7. Application is due by May 1 for the following school semester.
8. Only one scholarship will be awarded per student. Therefore, you will be considered ineligible if you have previously received a scholarship from the SWANA Florida Sunshine Chapter.

Your completed application will be forwarded to our Scholarship Chair, for recommendation and review by the Board of Directors.

The scholarship application, submission details, and additional scholarship opportunities can be found on the [Scholarship Page](#) on the SWANA FL Chapter website.

Member and Industry News

What's New with Organics Recycling in Florida? Mitch Kessler

Since the passage of Florida's Solid Waste Management Act in 1988, Kessler Consulting, Inc. (KCI) has been a leader in advancing organics recycling programs throughout the state and nation. One of its most significant contributions is the Florida Organics Recycling Center for Excellence (FORCE), developed in partnership with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP). Originally funded through legislative appropriation in 2001, FORCE has evolved in the last 25 years into a comprehensive clearinghouse of Florida-specific organics recycling information. The website now provides interactive facility maps, searchable research and development resources, state and national professional development/training events, and a plethora of educational resources at www.floridaforce.org.

There are a few key items currently shaping the future of organics recycling in Florida. Located below are links for guidance and regulations on what to be aware of and where to get more information.

Florida Resources:

Provided on the **SWANA Florida Sunshine Chapter** Website SWANA releases *2024 ARF Report on Organic Waste and CO2 Emissions* <https://swanafl.org/swana-releases-2024-arf-report-on-organic-waste-and-co2-emissions/>

Provided by **Recycle Florida Today (RFT) February 2026 Organics Legislative Update**

Organics Update: auxiliary containers, biosolids, drinking straws, food, and plastic waste, and PFAS/PFOs. <https://floridaforce.org/presentations/>

Provided on the **FL Dept. of Environmental Protection (FDEP) Rule 62-709**

F.A.C. Rule Chapter 62-709, which governs exemptions, registrations, and permitting requirements for organics recycling facilities compliance. For more information, go to: <https://flrules.org>, scroll down to the box shown below "Florida Administrative Register (FAR)" and enter "62-709" in the box and hit "GO". This will take you to everything that has been published on the FAR.

Provided on the **FL Composting Council (FLCC)** is how to get involved on their advocacy committee (legislative and regulatory) and become a member. <https://floridacompostingcouncil.org>



Compostable food packaging and food waste.

National Guidance on PFAS: PFOA/PFOs:

The **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA)** designation of certain *PFAS compounds* as hazardous substances and its potential implications for composting and organics recycling facilities. www.epa.gov/pfas



Equipment turning windrow piles.

Guidance and industry responses are available on the **U.S. Composting Council's (USCC)** website. www.compostingcouncil.org/page/PFAS-and-compost.

These developments are critical as Florida works to expand organics recycling. In 2023, there were a total of 18 million tons of MSW organics material collected out of the total municipal solid waste stream (53 million tons) yet recycling rates remain low for MSW organics material collected especially for food waste with a 3% recycling rate (lowest) while yard waste has a strong 62% recycling rate (highest). FORCE continues to support facility operators, communities, and policymakers by providing technical resources to help strengthen FL's organics recycling infrastructure through educational materials and advance sustainable materials management statewide.

Mitch Kessler is President of Kessler Consulting, Inc. (KCI) in Tampa, FL. Mitch directs and manages projects for solid waste, Zero Waste, recycling and composting clients throughout FL and the U.S. KCI is in its 38th year. Mitch has been the President

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of the FL SWANA Sunshine Chapter and a Board Member of SWANA International, the President of Recycle Florida Today, founder of FORA now the FLCC, and a long-standing member of the USCC. Mitch can be reached at mk@kesconsult.com or visit www.kesconsult.com.

Beyond the Bin: Building a Sustainable and Engaging School Recycling Culture

The Florida Recycling Partnership recently hosted its first *Beyond the Bin* webinar, spotlighting successful school recycling programs and practical strategies to build a culture of sustainability. The webinar was sponsored by the Florida Beverage Association and featured insights from Orange County Public Schools (OCPS) and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), offering real-world examples of how schools can improve recycling and reduce waste.

David Klawitter of Orange County Public Schools shared an in-depth look at OCPS's comprehensive

Every OCPS classroom is equipped with a recycling bin placed directly next to the trash can, reinforcing proper disposal habits. Above each recycling bin, clear signage shows students exactly what belongs inside. Teachers are also encouraged to show the *OCPS Recycle Right!* video on the first day of school to establish expectations early and ensure consistent messaging.

To make recycling simple and memorable, OCPS promotes its "Give Me 5! Materials in the Bins" campaign, highlighting the five items accepted in recycling bins: plastic bottles, paper, cardboard, metal (aluminum cans), and glass bottles. This straightforward approach helps reduce contamination and builds confidence among students.

Food waste reduction is another major focus. More than 50% of school waste is generated in cafeterias, so OCPS uses targeted signage such as "Milk Is Optional" posters to reduce unnecessary waste. Schools have also implemented share tables, allowing students to place unopened packaged foods and whole fruits where others can take them, minimizing edible food waste.

Education plays a critical role in reinforcing these efforts. OCPS teaches students why reducing, reusing, and recycling matter. According to the U.S. EPA, the average American generates approximately 5 pounds of trash per day nearly 1,800 pounds per year and an estimated 70% of that material could be recycled. With Orlando-area landfills projected to reach capacity within the next 20 years, OCPS emphasizes that action is urgent and individual choices matter.

Chris Perry from FDEP closed the webinar by discussing how schools can establish effective recycling systems and measure progress through waste audits. He reinforced the importance of proper bin placement, noting that recycling rates improve significantly when recycling bins are located next to trash cans.

If you missed the webinar, it is available for viewing at www.flrecycling.org, where additional OCPS resources will also be posted.

Keyna Cory is the Executive Director for the Florida Recycling Partnership Foundation. She can be reached at kenya@flrecycling.org.

Beyond the Bin Webinar
Building a Sustainable and Engaging School Recycling Culture

Hosted by the Florida Recycling Partnership Foundation
Sponsored by Florida Beverage Association

[Watch Webinar](#)

Download Webinar Materials:

[Classroom Sustainability Flyer](#)

[Green Coordinator Flyer](#)

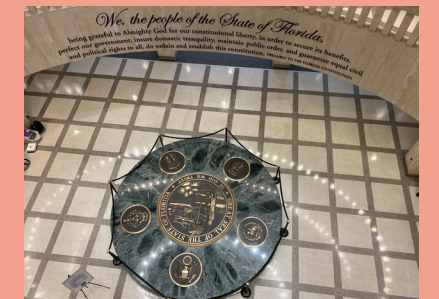
[District OCPS Flyer](#)



recycling and sustainability efforts. Central to their success is a program built on leadership engagement and meaningful input from teachers and students. OCPS has found that the most effective way to grow a "green culture" is to start on Day One—both in the classroom and across campus.

Florida Legislation Update

Florida's Legislative Session ended March 13. Almost 2,000 bills and committee substitutes were filed. Disposition on the bills that the Legislative Committee kept on top of can be found on the SWANA FL website (<https://swanafl.org>), under the "NEWS" tab. If you have questions on any of the bills listed, you can contact the Legislative Committee Chair from the link on the webpage update.



Talking Trash Newsletter

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Upcoming SWANA FL Events

2026 Chapter Road-E-O
April 24-25
Fort Myers, FL

2026 Summer Conference
July 19-21
Orlando, FL

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