

INTEGRATING MARINE DEBRIS PREVENTION WITH SOLID WASTE AND WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT

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KEYWORDS: Marine debris, solid waste, wastewater, stormwater, pollution prevention, recycling, waste minimization

Marine debris is a problem in oceans, coasts, and watersheds throughout the world; it litters beaches, entangles wildlife, and hinders navigation. While marine debris prevention efforts often target coastal and ocean activities, it is important to recognize that inland activities can significantly contribute to the persistent solid materials littering the oceans and endangering marine life. Lack of infrastructure to handle solid waste, poor waste management practices, and individual actions such as littering can all result in marine debris being carried by wind or runoff into nearby waterways, which in turn can carry the marine debris to the ocean. However, just as inland activities contribute to the problem, policies and programs designed to promote recycling, minimize waste, and better manage wastewater are potential solutions to addressing land-based sources of marine debris.

Effective marine debris prevention requires a watershed approach to address ocean impacts. Land-based sources of marine debris can best be addressed by integrating marine debris prevention efforts with solid waste and wastewater management. Existing recycling, waste minimization, stormwater control, and pollution prevention efforts at the local, state, and national level all provide a starting point for increased marine debris prevention. This presentation will focus on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's efforts to coordinate among its ocean and coastal protection, solid waste management, wastewater management, and pollution prevention programs and partners to strengthen marine debris prevention.

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