

## **STRATEGY 1: Reduction of Waste Generation**

Waste reduction means reducing waste at the source. As a consumer this can be achieved through avoiding disposable products, buying in bulk and developing mindful consumption habits. As a business, this can be accomplished through improved purchasing and packaging, eliminating the toxicity of products and in operations, and by refurbishing, selling and or donating used equipment and tools. The simple act of not creating waste is often overlooked as we strive to help our communities to properly divert as much material as possible. Waste reduction decreases greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change while also conserving natural resources and energy, and reducing pollution and the toxicity of our waste.

The Solid Waste Management Act of 1988 established New York State's Solid Waste Management Policy. The top solid waste management priority in this policy is to reduce the amount of solid waste generated. Similarly, the United States Environmental Protection Agency lists waste prevention as the most preferred waste management strategy. The County aims to align its actions with these policies, making waste reduction the number one priority under the Waste & Consumption goal.

Additionally, Erie County manages the Northeast Southtowns and Northwest Local Solid Waste Management Plans in addition to collaborating on the City of Buffalo's local Comprehensive Recycling Analysis. These plans include waste reduction as the number one priority in waste management strategies. Improvements in waste reduction at the source can be achieved through education, collaboration, support, and encouragement within all sectors of the community including individuals, commercial and not-for-profit entities, and local municipalities.

<b>DEFINITIONS FOR ACTIONS SPECIFICATIONS</b>
<b>Short-term:</b> By or before 2030
<b>Medium-term:</b> By 2040
<b>Long-term:</b> By 2050
<b>Direct:</b> County can directly control the action - relating to County operations and infrastructure
<b>Indirect:</b> Regional agencies and municipalities have control and/or County can support/influence
<b>Support:</b> State or Federal policies and programs

ACTION ITEM	HORIZON	SPHERE OF INFLUENCE	LEAD COUNTY ENTITY	PARTNERS
1.1: Phase out single use plastics and other single use products in government contracts and provide commercial entities with single use product reduction methodology.	Short-Term	Direct	Purchasing	NYSP2I, SBR
1.2: Encourage food waste reduction by educating farmers, businesses, organizations, and consumers on the prevalence of food waste, solutions to food waste, and promote programs such as EPA's Food: Too Good To Waste Program and USDA Let's Glean.	Ongoing	Direct/ Indirect	DEP	Local restaurant associations, Local grocery stores, EPA, USDA, municipalities, EMC, Schools
1.3: Promote and educate the community and businesses on mindful consumption through campaigns such as "Buy in Bulk" and "Bring Your Own" which aims to decrease packaging waste.	Ongoing	Direct	DEP	EPA, SBR, P2I
1.4: Educate and encourage community members and municipalities on disposal reduction habits, including potential incentives such as pay-as-you-throw pricing for municipal garbage.	Ongoing/ Long-Term	Direct	DEP	Local municipalities,
1.5: Work with external organizations to educate and encourage businesses and municipalities on the benefits of reducing energy usage, toxicity of products, improved packaging, and waste in supply chains.	Ongoing	Direct	DEP/ Purchasing	Sustainable Business Roundtable, NYSP2I, Local municipalities
1.6: Endorse state Extended Producer Responsibility legislation such as "Bottle Bill" legislation. (Senate Bill S1185C, Assembly Bill A10185, Assembly Bill A8668A)	Ongoing	Direct	DEP, County Executive	Statewide organizations, State and County legislatures

1.7: Encourage commercial entities to track waste, energy, and water data using EPA tools such as ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager.	Ongoing	Direct	DEP	EPA
1.8: Support community action groups whose goals align with creating effective changes in waste reduction practices.	Ongoing	Support	DEP	Local and state community action groups

**COMMENTS/WHAT’S MISSING?:**

- I might also include that businesses can include incentives for their customers to limit waste, whether that is refillable containers/bags, or providing transparency on the life cycle of the goods they sell. Alternatively, there can be incentives provided by municipalities to the businesses for adopting waste reduction practices and promoting annual targets set by munis.

**INFO BUBBLE TOPICS:**

- Mindful consumption
- EPA waste management hierarchy
- Food Too Good To Waste Program (EPA)
- Pay-as-you-throw garbage
- [Too Good To Go](#)- maybe best for reuse
- Educate about the false narratives around recycling, the fact that 90% of the plastics ever made have not been recycled, limited recycling facilities in US, and the climate injustice of sending our non-recyclable trash to less wealthy, underregulated countries.