

Toward Zero Waste: How is Brewster Doing?

Chris Powicki

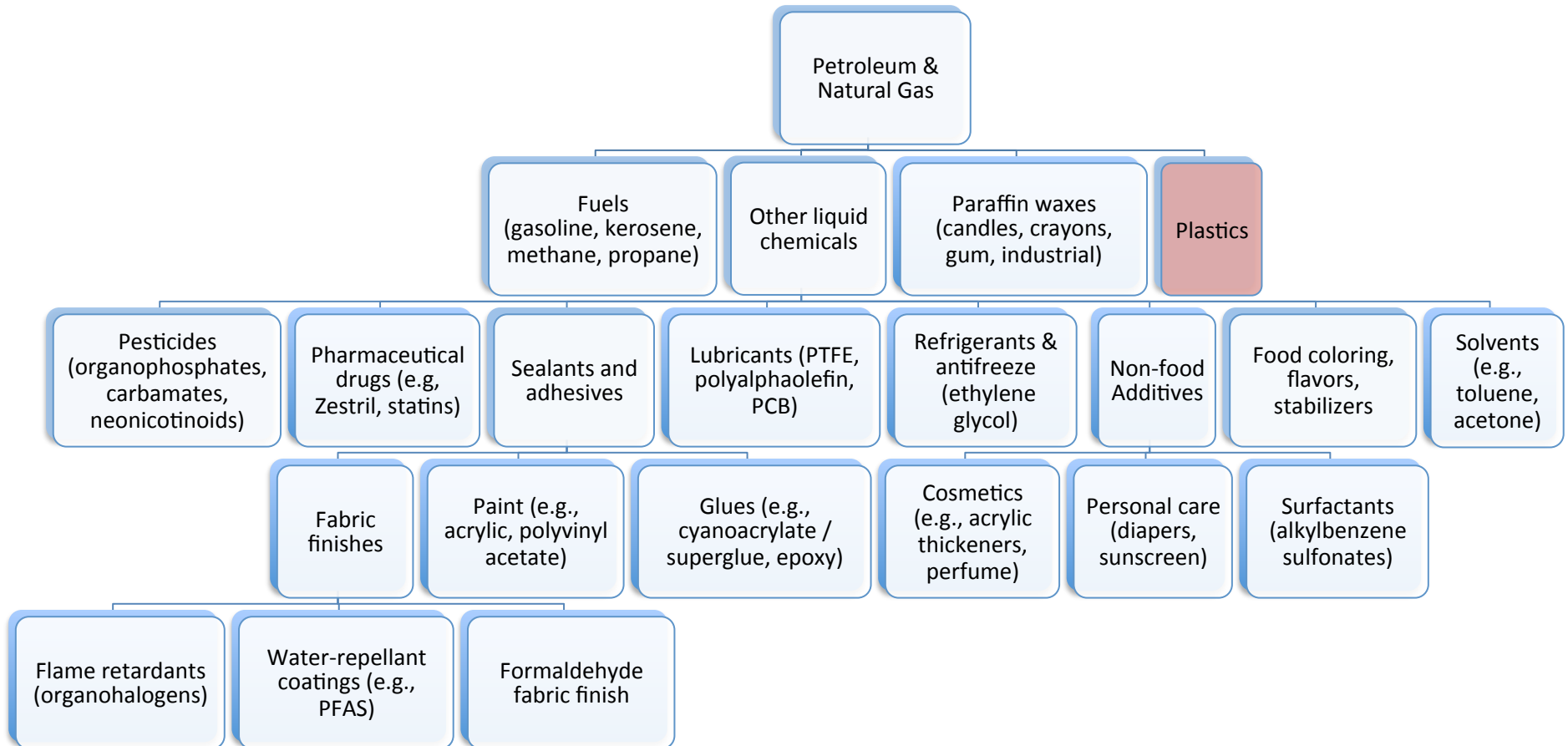
Executive Committee, Massachusetts Chapter and
Cape Cod Group



MASSACHUSETTS
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August 1, 2019

Plastics = Petrochemicals



Significant life-cycle environmental and climate costs: extraction, processing, transport, litter/disposal/recycling

The Problem with Plastics: Coastal Resource Impacts

- Plastics are ubiquitous, persistent, and bioaccumulative marine pollutants
- Recent World Economic Forum study concludes that there will be **as much plastic as fish in the ocean by 2050.**

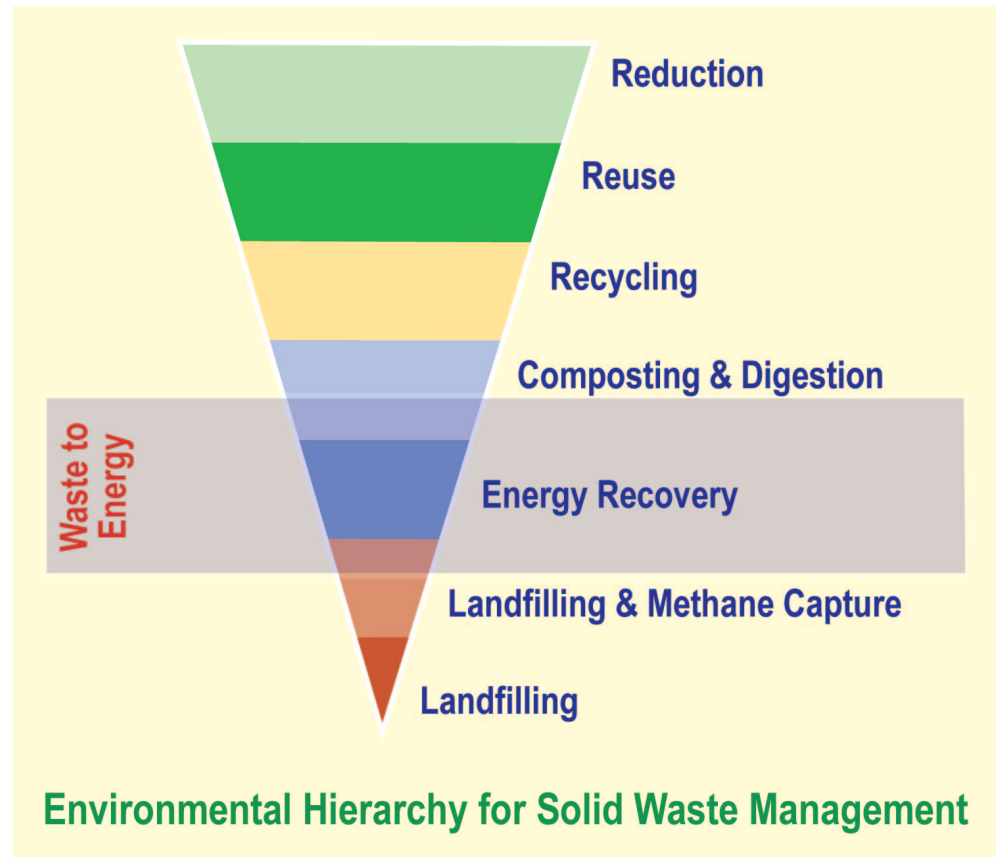
Individual actions – avoiding, reusing, recycling, picking up litter, etc. – are insufficient; the problems lie with industry/policy

Municipal/Community-Wide Priorities

1. Move Beyond Bury/Burn Practices
2. Pay As You Throw (PAYT)
3. Source Separation of Recyclables
4. Diversion of Organic Materials
5. Single-Use Plastic Bans

1: Beyond Bury/Burn

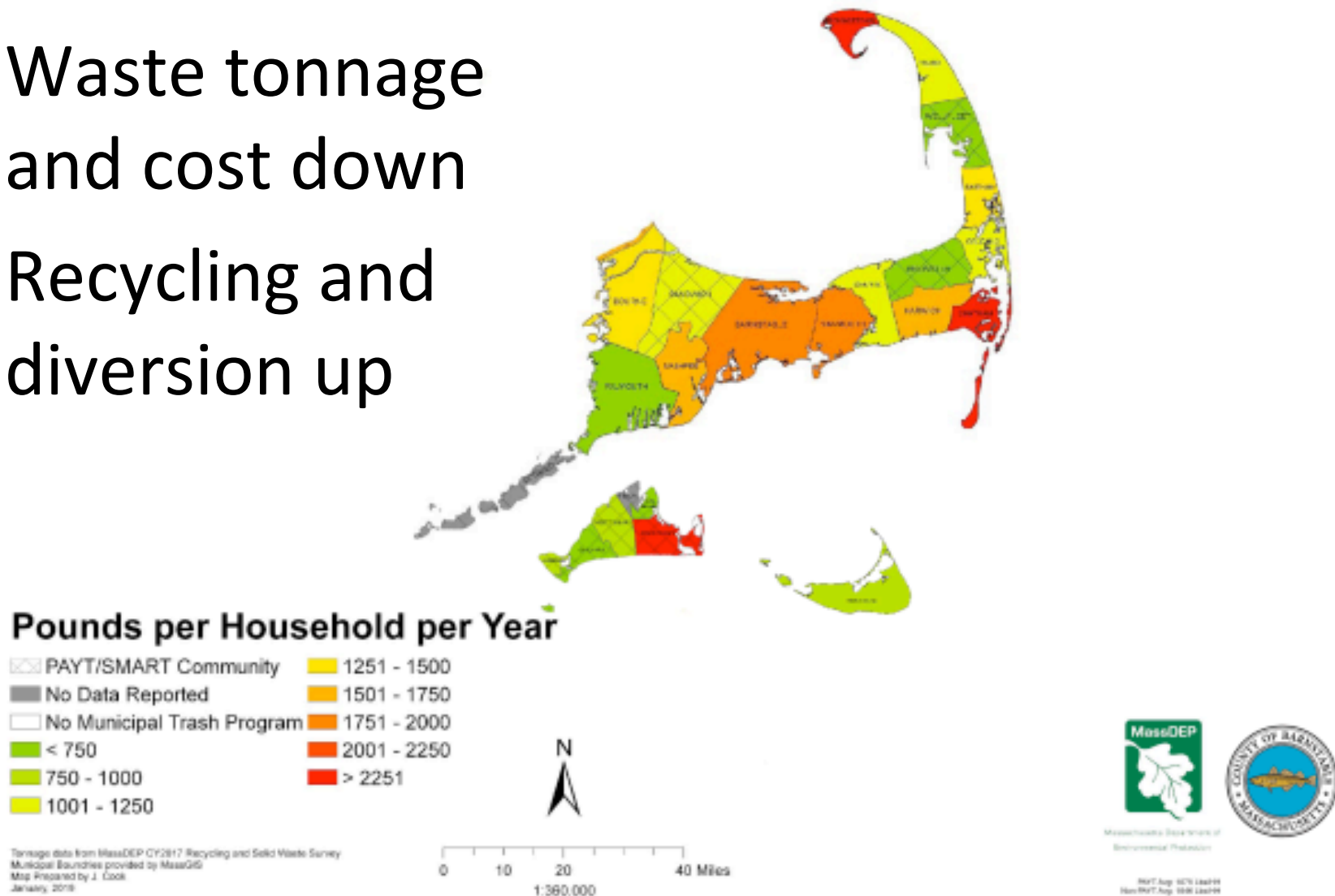
Brewster Selectmen executed contract extension with Covanta SEMASS incinerator in 2010, extending period of performance from 2014 to 2029



Early signing with immediate cost increase, no savings on tip fee (but now reduced hauling costs), longest-term commitment to incineration (no landfilling)

2: PAYT (2017 Data)

- Waste tonnage and cost down
- Recycling and diversion up



Early adopter, clear benefits in reducing incineration

3: Source Separation of Recyclables

- Commingling paper/ cardboard/newspaper
- Under PAYT, Brewster began commingling plastics, metals, glass to facilitate recycling
- Regional opportunity: Dennis mixed glass processing



Commingling increases PAYT diversion rates but reduces quality/value of “recyclables” (cost center vs. revenue stream)

4: Organics Diversion

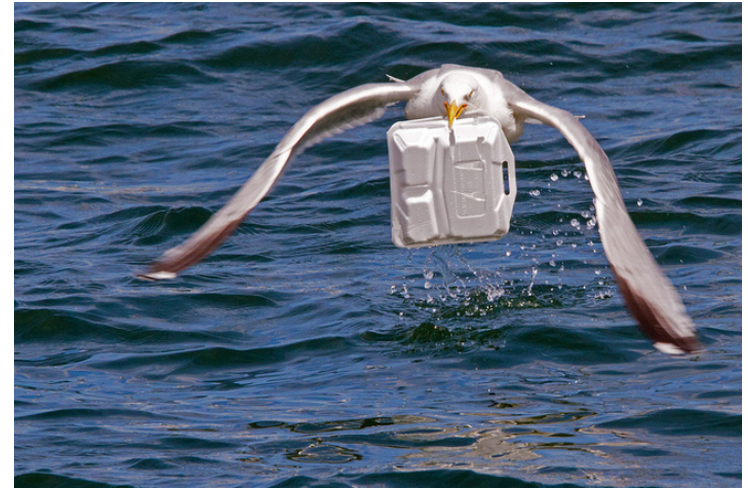
- Yard waste/tree trimming processing ongoing
- Food waste pilot ongoing
- Regional opportunity: Yarmouth digester



Regional collection and processing provides opportunity - critical to separate clean organics from contaminated sludge

5: Single-Use Plastic Bans

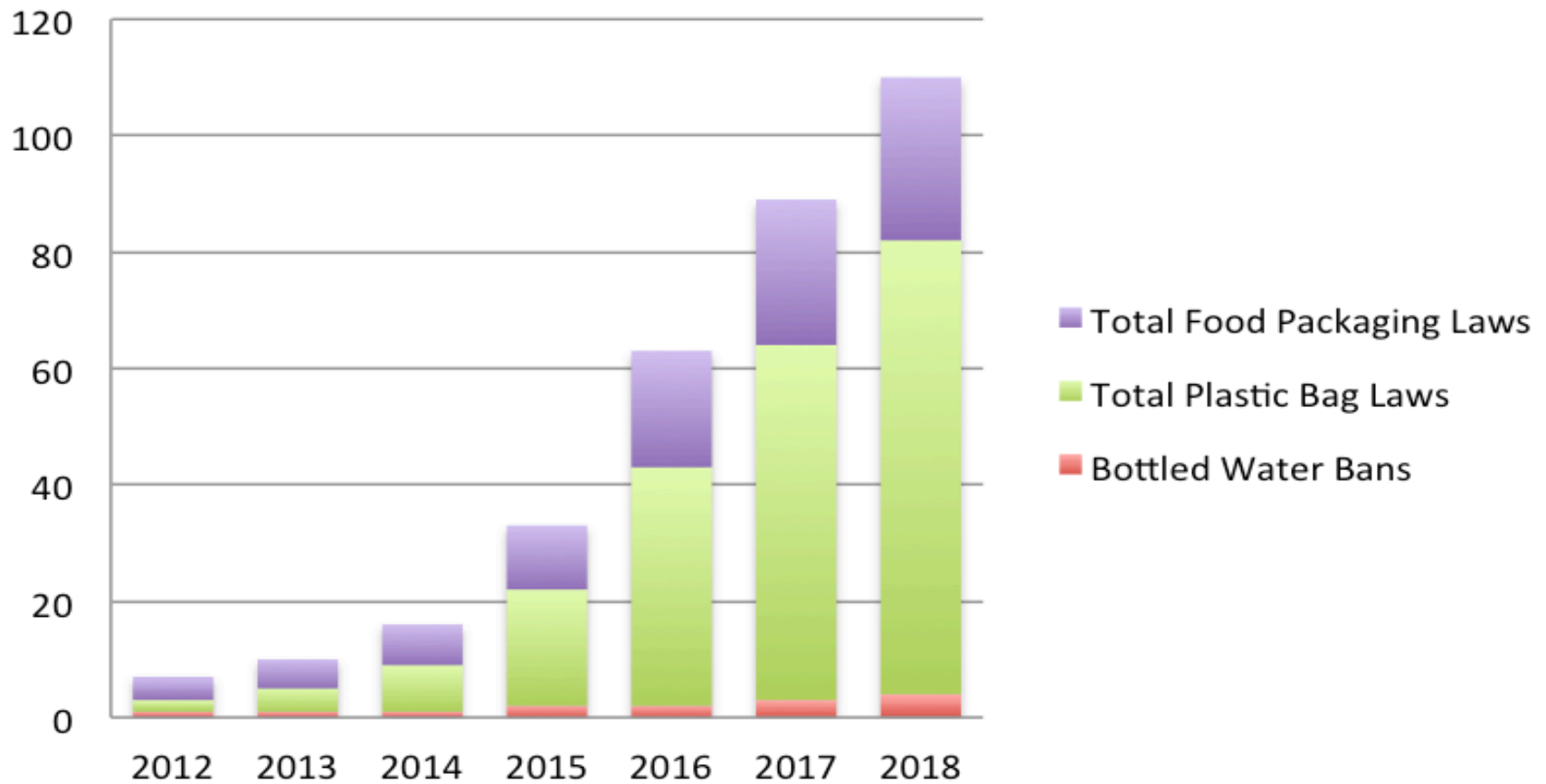
- **Bags:** passed May 2019; effective June 2020
- **Bottled water and other beverages:** “Municipal Bottle Ban” opposed by Recycling Commission, deferred in May 2019; municipal task force working on issue
- **Food ware, retail polystyrene, balloons, straws:** No action



Delay, resistance, inaction

Trend in Massachusetts

Cumulative Total Plastic Packaging Laws in Massachusetts



State Bag Ban Legislation

- 2019-20 bill, redrafted and reported out of Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources & Agriculture, is weaker than proposed legislation and would undermine local progress
 - Preempts local bag bans (now >120)
 - Allows thicker plastic bags
 - Does not include modest fee on paper bags
- Contact Rep. Sarah Peake / Rep. Tim Whelan: No on H. 771, “An Act Reducing Plastic Bag Pollution”

You are not the problem – the petrochemical/plastics, waste management, and politics industries are. Your voice and vote count at local and state level!

Contacts & Further Info

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“Let’s Talk Trash”

August 6, Brewster Town Hall, 6 – 8 pm