The Northeast Recycling Council, Inc. (NERC) is a regional non-profit organization comprised of the ten Northeastern states: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont. NERC’s mission is “to promote sustainable materials management by supporting traditional and innovative solid waste best practices, focusing on waste prevention, toxics reduction, reuse, recycling, and organics recovery.”

Through its mission and activities, NERC promotes and endorses a sustainable materials management (SMM) strategy as a critical component of achieving an environmentally sustainable economy.

In February 2015, NERC’s current SMM projects and programs include:

- In Vermont, NERC is working with four schools to establish organics diversion and composting programs, as well as increasing recycling.
  - Assisting in establishing lunch food scrap collection programs.
  - Training students, staff, and volunteers to monitor and support the program.
  - Establishing on-site composting in some schools.

- In New York, providing technical assistance in the development and implementation of reuse programming in rural communities.
  - Working with three counties and the Mohawk Nation to establish reuse events and ongoing programming.

- In Vermont, working with the hospitality industry to establish and expand food waste reduction and organics diversion programs.
  - Providing technical assistance to restaurants and sporting venues to decrease food waste, increase food donation, and divert waste to local composting programs.
  - Encouraging their participation in EPA’s Food Recovery Challenge.

- Providing education about and promoting the use of environmentally preferable purchasing.
  - Working with procurement officials in Delaware, Maine, Rhode Island, and Vermont to increase EPP procurement of office supplies, office paper, and toner cartridges.
  - Through the State Electronics Challenge, promoting the use of the EPEAT standard for computers and imaging equipment.

- Spring conference focused on sustainable materials management.
  - Taking place in Delaware in early April, topics include product stewardship, single-stream collection and processing, dirty MRFs, and EPA’s perspective on SMM.

- Webinars on organics, food recovery and waste prevention, green procurement of toner cartridges, sustainable supply chains, and lifecycle assessments.
  - NERC will be offering a series of webinars in conjunction with the Golisano Institute on these topics in the first six months of 2015.

- National programs supporting state laws on electronics take-back laws and toxic use reduction (Electronics Recycling Coordination Clearinghouse (ERCC), and the Toxics in Packaging Clearinghouse (TPCH))
  - These include education, multi-state collaboration on implementation efficiencies, stakeholder engagement, and research projects.

What NERC Would Like to See in the NRC National Plan

- A strategy for obtaining the federal government’s recognition that sustainable materials management is important in order to decrease the environmental impacts that influence climate change.

- Working with the federal government to define, create and implement a sustainable materials management policy that will provide leadership to federal agencies and to state and local government.

- Programs to address difficult to recycle materials, including engaging stakeholders and the supply chain to identify source reduction and recycling economic development strategies to improve material recovery and avoid waste.

- Assistance for establishing metrics to better estimate the amount of food waste generated from different types of sources and establishments.