

**SUNY COLLEGE OF ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE AND FORESTRY
ADMINISTRATION POLICY LIBRARY**

Zero Waste and Circularity Policy

Section 4, General

Zero Waste and Circularity Policy

Responsible Executive: Mark Lichtenstein

Responsible Office: Office of Sustainability



POLICY STATEMENT

This policy applies to all operations across all ESF campuses, properties, and field stations, including food service and retail operations. It sets measurable and achievable College-wide zero waste and circularity goals, procedures for the management and diversion of materials, and expectations for monitoring and reporting.

REASON FOR POLICY

The SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF) is a premier environmental academic and research institution. The College also exhibits excellence in sustainable and environmentally conscious operations. In 2019, the College set a series of informal goals related to campus circularity and zero waste and in 2021 adopted a Green Purchasing & Break Free from Plastics Policy and a Sustainable Facilities Maintenance & Renovation Policy. This overarching Zero Waste & Circularity Policy formalizes the College's stated goals and builds upon the two previously adopted policies.

SCOPE OF POLICY

This policy applies to:

X President
X Executive Leadership
X Deans, Directors & Department Heads
X Area Managers & Supervisors
X Faculty
X Staff

X Students
X Others: Any entity affiliated with the College which has decision making responsibility that results in direct or indirect impacts on procurement of goods or services impacting College waste generation and management

WEB SITE REFERENCES

This policy: <https://www.esf.edu/sustainability/index.php>

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RELATED INFORMATION

ESF Green Purchasing and Break Free from Plastics Policy	https://www.esf.edu/employees/policies/business/policy-green-purchasing.php
ESF Green Purchasing Guide	https://www.esf.edu/sustainability/projects/green_purchase_guide.php
ESF Sustainable Facilities Maintenance and Renovation Policy	https://www.esf.edu/employees/policies/sustainability/policy-leed-facilities-maintenance.php
Maintenance and renovation diversion log	https://www.esf.edu/sustainability/projects/sus_reno.php
Construction and demolition debris information – vendors and haulers	https://www.esf.edu/sustainability/projects/sus_reno.php
NYS Executive Order 22	https://www.governor.ny.gov/executive-order/no-22-leading-example-directing-state-agencies-adopt-sustainability-and

CONTACTS

Specific questions should be directed to the following:

Subject	Contact	Telephone	Office or Department E-Mail / Web Address
Policy Clarification, General Information & Policy Development	Office of Sustainability	(315) 470-6701	sustainability@esf.edu https://www.esf.edu/sustainability/

DEFINITIONS

BPI Certified compostable	BPI certified compostable materials are those that have been tested and certified by the Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI) and meet specific eligibility requirements, are free of fluorinated chemicals (PFAS), meet labeling requirements and are included in the BPI online product database. Products with this designation are verified to be fully compostable in commercial composting facilities. For more information, visit the BPI Website: www.bpiworld.org .
Construction & demolition debris	Material debris resulting from the construction of new buildings and other infrastructure and from the destruction or demolition of existing structures.
Circularity	The focus on resource cycles with the aim of reducing resource extraction/waste and the maximization of material and product reuse.
Diversion rate	The portion of materials (by weight) not sent to landfill or incineration.
Incineration	Incineration is the process of burning materials through combustion to convert materials into ash, flue gas, and heat. Incineration is a common alternative method of waste disposal to landfills. Industrial incineration facilities are often referred to as waste-to-energy facilities.
Municipal solid waste	More commonly known as trash or garbage, municipal solid waste is a nonhomogeneous mixture of waste materials and residues generated from residential, commercial, and industrial sectors. These materials are typically disposed in landfills or through incineration.

Sustainable materials management	According to the US Environmental Protection Agency , sustainable materials management (SMM) is a systematic approach to using and reusing materials more productively and sustainably throughout their lifecycles, from the point of resource extraction through material disposal. SMM is an approach that seeks to minimize the amount of materials utilized, minimize the associated environmental impacts from their use and extraction, and ensure there are sufficient resources to meet the needs of today and those of the future.
TRUE	Total Resource Use and Efficiency (TRUE) is a zero-waste certification program from the Green Building Certification Institute (GBCI). This comprehensive certification program recognizes facilities, events, and construction sites for minimizing resource consumption, preventing waste, and redesigning material life cycles so that all residual materials are reused in a closed loop. For more information, visit the TRUE website: www.true.gbci.org .
TRUE Certification	TRUE Certification helps businesses and organizations to define, pursue, and achieve their zero waste goals, cut their carbon footprint, and support public health. The certification goes beyond diversion rates and focuses on the upstream policies and practices that make zero waste successful in any organization and beyond. For more information see the TRUE Guide to Certification .
TRUE Precertification	TRUE Precertification recognizes projects which have implemented the fundamental actions and policies needed to effectively pursue zero waste and have demonstrated a commitment to achieving TRUE certification. To achieve precertification, facilities must submit strategies or complete actions from a subset of TRUE Minimum Program Requirements and credits. For more information, see the TRUE Precertification Guide .
Waste	Any material discarded from a SUNY ESF campus, property, or field station that is not reused, recycled, composted, or otherwise destined for another type of beneficial use
Zero Waste	According to the Zero Waste International Alliance , zero waste is the conservation of all resources by means of responsible production, consumption, reuse, and recovery of products, packaging, and materials without burning and without discharges to land, water, or air that threaten the environment or human health.

POLICY DETAILS

Scope

This policy applies to all operations across all ESF campuses, properties, and field stations, including food service and retail operations.

Goals

ESF will achieve campus-wide zero waste and circularity through the lens of sustainable materials management, which prioritizes the use of materials in the most productive way possible, with an emphasis on using less, and viewing environmental impacts throughout a material's entire lifecycle.

ESF prioritizes the management of materials in the following hierarchical order:

- Reduction
- Reuse
- Recycling and Composting
- Landfill and Incineration

NYS Executive Order 22: “Leading by Example: Directing State Agencies to Adopt a Sustainability and Decarbonization Program” also prioritizes reducing waste at the source and sets associated waste reduction goals. This Policy will meet and, in many instances, exceed the requirements of Executive Order 22.

The zero waste and circularity goals included in this Policy are to be integrated within future planning documents at ESF (Strategic Plans, Sustainability Action Plans, Facilities Master Plans, Carbon Neutrality Plans etc.).

Goal	Implementation Deadline
Ban purchase of single-use plastics* with state dollars, for use on ESF campuses or at ESF events	Immediate (adopted November 2021)
Ban purchase of single-use plastics* with any funding source, for use on ESF campus or at ESF events (including contracted vendors, auxiliary services etc.)	December 31, 2024
Obtain TRUE Precertification for Syracuse campus as a “Portfolio”	December 31, 2023
Obtain TRUE Certification for all ESF campuses as a “Portfolio”	December 31, 2027
Develop and Adopt a Zero Waste and Circularity Action Plan	May 31, 2024
Reduce the waste that the College sends to landfill and incineration by 90% (by weight, compared to 2018 baseline)	December 31, 2026
Achieve a diversion rate of 90% (by weight, compared to 2018 baseline)	December 31, 2026

* *Plastics listed as banned in the Green Purchasing and Break Free from Plastics Policy*

PROCEDURES

Management and Diversion of Materials


- **Reduction:** The Office of Sustainability will collaborate closely with other offices, departments, and divisions (academic and administrative) to assess products and materials necessary to support their operations. To the greatest extent practicable, an emphasis will be placed upon purchasing and using less. This includes items used as “giveaways” at events and similar activities. Single-use plastic bin liners in offices are banned, as are single-use plastic liners associated with bins less than 7 gallons in size, to the greatest extent practicable throughout campus (ex: conference rooms).
- **Reuse:** The Office of Sustainability will collaborate closely with other offices, departments, and divisions (academic and administrative) to determine the feasibility of transitioning single-use or limited-use items to durable, reusable alternatives. The Office of Sustainability will serve a leadership role alongside the Office of Business Affairs to improve the College’s surplus property program and will also develop a robust reuse program for consumable and durable items, such as lab and office supplies. The Office of Sustainability will also partner with the Division and Student Affairs and Centennial Hall to maximize material reuse during student move in/out.
- **Recycling and Compost (general and specialized streams):** The Office of Sustainability will collaborate closely with other offices, departments, and divisions (academic and administrative) to ensure that opportunities to recycle general materials (ex: glass, plastics, paper, cardboard) on campus are convenient and accessible to all. The Office will also engage deeply with campus stakeholders to continually identify materials that may be able to be removed from the waste stream and recycled. This includes, but is not limited to traditionally difficult to recycle items such as electronics, shredded paper, bricks, pallets, hard cover books, and construction and demolition debris, etc. Compost bins will be co-located with trash and recycling bins, to the greatest extent possible, and the Office of Sustainability will collaborate with regional campuses to assess the feasibility of implementing compost programs across all ESF campuses.

- **Landfill and Incineration:** The Office of Sustainability will collaborate closely with other offices, departments, and divisions (academic and administrative) to ensure that the College reduces the material that it sends to landfill and incineration to the greatest extent practicable.
- **Zero Waste and Circularity Action Plan:** The Office of Sustainability will develop and adopt a detailed Zero Waste & Circularity Action Plan to create goals, objectives, and strategies that will enable the College to achieve compliance with this Policy.

Monitoring & Reporting

- **Materials characterization (waste) audits:** The Office of Sustainability will conduct at least one trash audit and at least one recycling audit per semester. These audits will be open to participation by the entire campus community. Audits will assess the accuracy of campus sorting (proper placement of materials in trash, recycling, compost bins), track contamination rates, and will inform future improvements to campus zero waste programs.
- **Project specific diversion reports:** The Division of Sustainable Facilities and Operations will provide the Office of Sustainability with project specific diversion reports detailing materials that were reused, recycled (or otherwise beneficially used), and those that were sent to landfill or incineration. Reports should include actual weights or volume estimates of each material stream produced during a construction, maintenance, or renovation project. The Office of Sustainability will develop a reporting template and will keep a database of local construction and demolition material recycling/reuse opportunities. Diversion reports must be submitted to the Office of Sustainability within 14 days of project completion.
- **Invoice monitoring and weight tracking:** The Office of Sustainability will serve as a repository for all invoices, weight estimates, weight tickets, and related documentation necessary to track progress in achieving the College's zero waste and circularity goals. College departments, divisions, and offices are required to furnish the Office of Sustainability with this information within 14 days of receipt.
- **Publicly available zero waste and circularity data:** The Office of Sustainability will maintain and publish zero waste and circularity data. This data will be updated at least annually and will include, but not be limited to a campus-by-campus breakdown of trash, recycling, and compost weights (actual or estimated) and aggregated College-wide diversion and reduction statistics.

HISTORY – PROCEDURE REVISION RECORD

12/01/2023- Procedure Implementation	Policy signed by Executive Operating Officer Mark Lichtenstein (thereby adopting procedures) 
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RESPONSIBILITIES

Offices of the President and Executive Leadership	Possess understanding of this Policy and ensure that units reporting through the Office of the President and Executive Leadership share this understanding. Enable compliance with this Policy through providing support necessary for its implementation. Include the Office of Sustainability in planning for high level decisions to ensure that this Policy is integrated from initiative inception.
Office of Sustainability	Provide technical assistance, expertise, and guidance to the campus community. Serve as a data/document repository. Implement this Policy.
Department, Division and Office Leads	Ensure that faculty/staff understand this Policy and integrate all requirements to meet this Policy in daily operations. Request assistance from the Office of Sustainability as needed.
Faculty, Staff & Students	Understand and seek to implement goals and requirements of this Policy. Request assistance from the Office of Sustainability as needed.

APPENDICES

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HISTORY – POLICY REVISION RECORD

12/01/2023-Policy Implementation	Signed by Executive Operating Officer Mark Lichtenstein 
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