



City of Malden

Malden City Hall
215 Pleasant Street
Malden, MA 02148

Legislation Text

File #: 559-15, Version: 1

Mayor's Veto of Paper #224-14 (Reducing fees for Solid Waste Collection)

Dear Members of the City Council:

I write to let you know that I am returning, unsigned, the ordinance amending Section 9.28 of the Revised Ordinances of 1991 which reduces fees for the collection of solid waste. I submit the following objections for your review:

1. The legislation comes at a time when our finances remain in a precarious position. We continue to run a structural deficit of approximately \$3-4 million on an annual basis. I believe we need to thoroughly evaluate the financial impact of any changes to the current program so that we can all be assured that we can maintain the delivery of services that our residents have come to expect and deserve.
2. The ordinance does not address what many of those opposed to the program have advocated for which is the outright elimination of Pay As You Throw (PAYT) or at the very least an alternative which would preclude the need to purchase bags for the disposal of solid waste.
3. There is also the unknown factor that this amended ordinance would have on our current recycling rates. The positive impact of the current program has not only been the reduction in trash volume but also the increase in recycling. We presently recycle an average of 30 to 40 percent of our solid waste which translates into hundreds of thousands of dollars saved. Any change to PAYT could negatively affect this percentage.
4. This amendment does not address what we have repeatedly heard to be a prevailing problem which is the mess that the open 18-gallon recycle bins are making throughout the city. Public Works Director Bob Knox has stated that if he could change one thing it would be to increase the capacity of the recycling bins and require covers to better contain our recyclables.
5. Finally, this ordinance does not take into account the recommendations made by the panel of residents who spent over a year working on alternatives to improve our program. I believe it is a lost opportunity not to take advantage of their hard work and dedication.

As always, I appreciate your time and effort on topics like this but I believe an amendment of this importance requires more time and thoughtful dialogue, both internally and with the public, prior to any change. As evidenced by the 5-4 vote to ordain the paper, it is clear the Council is divided on the matter.

If you should have any further questions, please contact me at 781-397-7000, option 6 or email me at mayor@cityofmalden.org <<mailto:mayor@cityofmalden.org>>.

Sincerely,
GARY CHRISTENSON, Mayor