LEGISLATION AND REGULATION
VOLUME-BASED REFUSE COLLECTION FEES

Rationale

Many cities offer unlimited garbage collection service for a flat fee. Once recycling services are offered so that residents can choose to waste or to recycle, a limit to the amount of waste accepted at a base price should have a significant impact on consumer behavior. This base price for garbage service is analogous to the "lifeline" services provided by utilities to provide basic service while promoting conservation.

Changes in rate structure may need to be phased in gradually to diminish illegal dumping and enable generators to efficiently reduce waste. Variable can rates could also influence consumer behavior by charging ratepayers fees which are directly proportional to the number of cans or bags they are authorized to set out.

Policy

Limited or variable can rates should be considered a critical first step toward a rate structure that discourages waste. Variable can rate structures should ideally rise steeply so that the rate for pickup of second and third cans is more that 2-3 times the rate for the first can.

Cross-reference: Financing