HIERARCHY OF WASTE MANAGEMENT PREFERENCES

Rationale

Source reduction and recycling can conserve energy and natural resources, create jobs and employment opportunities, and conserve landfill space. Other forms of waste disposal, such as waste-to-energy facilities and sanitary landfilling, are less preferable in terms of resource conservation and environmental protection.

Policy

The National Recycling Coalition endorses and supports a hierarchy of waste management preferences that gives first priority to source reduction, reuse, recycling, and composting to minimize the amount of waste to be otherwise managed.

Policies should also be adopted at local, state and federal levels of government to pursue an integrated waste management hierarchy of priorities for solving solid waste problems. Such a hierarchy should be established consisting of source reduction, recycling/composting, transformation (including all types of capital intensive processing techniques to convert wastes from one form to another, such as gasification) and disposal (landfill).

The hierarchy should place primary emphasis on implementing all feasible source reduction, recycling and composting while not precluding communities from considering transformation facilities and landfills to address waste which cannot be reduced at the source, recycled or composted, Such a hierarchy should govern all solid waste policies particularly the planning for and regulation of all waste facilities,