



January 25, 2021

State Disaster Medical Advisory Committee
Wisconsin Department of Health Services
Sent via Email to: dhssdmac@dhs.wisconsin.gov

RE: Prioritizing COVID-19 vaccinations for the solid waste and recycling workers of Wisconsin

Please accept this letter on behalf of the Associated Recyclers of Wisconsin, Solid Waste Association of North America-Badger Chapter and the Wisconsin Counties Solid Waste Management Association. These three organizations represent the men and women of Wisconsin's solid waste and recycling industry.

Our three organizations support the scope of the Wisconsin Health and Human Services' COVID-19: Vaccine Phases and Eligibility Plan. Distributing the vaccine and vaccinating millions of Wisconsinites is a monumental logistical task. And, it is critically important for all of the people of Wisconsin.

The solid waste and recycling sector are comprised of companies and municipal agencies that employ men and women across this great state. They collect, process, and dispose of municipal solid waste. These people are on the front lines of managing society's waste in a job that is listed in the top 10 most dangerous jobs in the nation. COVID-19 exacerbates the dangers that are faced by these men and women on a daily basis. Despite the increased risks caused by COVID-19, Wisconsin's waste and recycling workers have steadfastly shown up for work throughout a pandemic, protecting human health and the environment. Their work includes handling COVID-contaminated wastes and recycling processing facilities have workers standing shoulder-to-shoulder with one another sorting your recycling. Protecting is critical.

Without a doubt, we fully support prioritizing the healthcare sector and the elderly in long-term care facilities for the first doses of the vaccine. Clearly their needs far outweigh all others. Now, as Wisconsin moves toward the Tier 2 groups of people, **the signatory organizations of this letter request that the State Disaster Medical Advisory Committee prioritize the front line solid waste and recycling workers for vaccination with other frontline workers.** Including frontline solid waste and recycling workers in the next tier of people approved for a COVID-19 vaccine will ensure these essential workers remain healthy enough to continue to serve every household, every business and every organization in Wisconsin. The work our frontline workers do is critical to protecting human health, especially during a global pandemic.

Associated Recyclers of Wisconsin is a professional association, with members from local government, businesses and non-profit groups, which provides statewide proactive leadership on waste reduction and recycling through education, advocacy, collaboration, programs and services.

Contact: President Meleesa Johnson, (Marathon Co. Solid Waste Director), meleesa.johnson@co.marathon.wi.us 715-573-3165

Solid Waste Association of North America- Badger Chapter has more than 150 members in Wisconsin, providing information, training programs, and networking opportunities to solid waste professionals and sharing ideas and solutions to better manage municipal waste.

Contact: President John Welch, (Dane Co. Waste & Renewables Director), 608-267-8815 Welch@countyofdane.com

Wisconsin Counties Solid Waste Management Association works with all counties to promote effective and environmentally sound waste management systems and resource recovery efforts.

Contact: Chair Gerry Neuser, (Manitowoc County Public Works Director), 920-683-4307 GerryNeuser@co.manitowoc.wi.us