

## 2022 Statewide Materials Characterization Study now available

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DES MOINES — The 2022 Statewide Materials Characterization Study identifying and quantifying materials being landfilled in Iowa is now available. The study will be the basis for implementing new and updated programs and policies and enhancing existing efforts to further reduce and recycle end of life materials.

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources contracted with consulting firm SCS Engineers to conduct the study.

Early data analysis shows that overall paper, organics and plastics were the most landfilled material categories, by weight. Food waste was, by far, the most landfilled material component followed by plastic film (including plastic shopping bags), cardboard, textiles, and compostable paper. Over 70 percent of the landfilled materials are considered reusable, recyclable or compostable.

The department and local governments will use the data to make program and policy decisions, to expand waste diversion initiatives, improve existing program efficiencies, and identify public awareness needs.

The study will also help the DNR measure progress in obtaining waste reduction and recycling goals.

Data was gathered from hand sorting and categorizing nearly 54 tons of municipal solid waste at ten landfills across Iowa. In addition, dedicated construction and demolition loads received at the landfills were visually sorted for the first time to gain an understanding of construction and demolition debris generation.

The data is supportive of circular economy concepts designed to keep materials, products and services in circulation for as long as possible. Information also supports the Sustainable Materials Management initiative, currently underway, which establishes materials management programs and policy decisions based on environmental impacts throughout the material's life cycle – from resource extraction to processing, manufacturing, transportation, use and end-of-life disposal.

The 2022 Statewide Materials Characterization Study final report is posted at [iowadnr.gov](http://iowadnr.gov) under the waste planning and recycling tab.