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Businessmen Eagerly Await Recycling Law

By Lena Smirnova

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Russia has no shortage of recyclable household waste, though 95 percent of it still winds up in landfills. **Igor Tabakov**

Business is urging the government to expedite legislation that would introduce recycling fees for household waste to attract investments into the industry, but officials from the Natural Resources and Environment Ministry said this law will not be ready for at least another three years.

Under the proposed changes to waste management laws, which have been under discussion since 2010, manufacturers would have to guarantee that they will recycle waste either at their own facilities or by hiring a specialized firm.

Manufacturers would have to meet different recycling quotas depending on what products they produce, said Svetlana Yurmanova, director at the natural resources ministry, at a recycling conference organized by Vedomosti last week. She specified that such requirements

would apply to glass, plastic, paper, cardboard, metals, household appliances, tires and furniture.

If the manufacturers cannot recycle waste themselves, they would have to pay recycling fees. The revenues from these fees would be collected into a non-budget fund and used to support the burgeoning waste management industry.

"The level of waste recycling today is still insufficient as compared to how quickly garbage piles up," Yurmanova said. "This is, first of all, linked to the absence of a recycling industry in our country."

Recycling fees could be in place by 2016, provided that the Duma approves the changes to waste management laws by the end of 2014, Yurmanova said.

The draft changes specifying the fees were first presented to the State Duma in 2010 and reviewed in a first reading. Amendments proposed for approval in a second reading, including a detailed mechanism for how businesses would be made responsible for their waste, were supposed to be presented to the Duma last December, but deadlines kept getting pushed back.

In April, President Vladimir Putin gave officials another year to develop the process.

Anzor Shomakhov, the official responsible for ecology for the Moscow region, said he did not mind if it takes a long time to draft the proposal because this would ensure its quality.

"I am afraid that such a complicated and important document for the recycling industry is unlikely to come out any earlier and, to be honest, it will probably not be good if it is made in haste with defects," Shomakhov said.

But business leaders are urging officials not to be perfectionists and to speed up the passage of the law. There are no incentives to invest in the industry until this law is in place, said Pyotr Bobrovsky, a member of the national union of recycling businesses.

"We are not getting on with the formation of an industry even though the Moscow and Leningrad regions are suffocating from waste," he said. "Nobody will invest money while we keep contemplating the draft law."

Living Greenly: Recycling Options in Moscow

Item	Recycling point	Compensation	Conditions
Clothing	John the Baptist Church (2 Maly Predtechensky pereulok, metro Krasnopresenskaya, +7-495-255-6572) Works from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily	None	Clothes should be clean, dry and not ripped. The church is particularly eager to get warm clothes and shoes, which it donates to the homeless.

Batteries	Collection point (6/3 Runovsky pereulok, metro Novokuznetskaya, +7-495-951-9973) Works 24 hours, but call in advance to make sure someone is there to receive.	None	They accept mercury-containing light bulbs and batteries. You can also drop off glass, paper, plastic and non-ferrous scrap metal at this location.
Glass	Center for Ecological Initiatives (6 Melnitsky pereulok, metro Chkalovskaya, +7-903-961-4234) Works 24 hours a day, but call in advance to ensure someone is there.	Small volumes: 2 rubles ($0.06) per kilogram. Large volume: 4,000 rubles per ton.	Ideally, clean the glass before you deliver: Rinse bottles and take off their caps. You can also drop off paper, plastic and nonferrous scrap metal at this location.
Metal	Collection point (1 Ulitsa Devyataya Rota, metro Preobrazhenskaya Ploshchad, +7-962-996-9437) Works Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Saturday and Sunday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.	Small volumes: 30 rubles per kilogram of aluminum, 80 rubles per kilogram of brass, and 70 rubles per kilogram of copper. Large volumes: 40,000-55,000 rubles per ton of aluminum, 94,000 rubles per ton of brass, and 185,000-200,000 rubles per ton of copper (average market prices)	They accept only nonferrous metals.
Paper	Collection point Frunzenskoye (9A Gruzinsky Val, metro Belorusskaya, +7-499-195-3077) Works Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m., Saturday to 4 p.m. and Sunday to 2 p.m.	Small volume: Not more than 1 ruble per kilogram. Large volume: 350 to 3,800 rubles per ton, depending on the quality of the paper. Newsprint sells for 3,000 rubles per ton while magazine paper can go for up to 3,800 rubles per ton (average market prices)	Price depends on the paper's cleanliness, quality and dampness. You can also drop off glass and nonferrous scrap metal at this location.

Plastic	Sfera Ekologii (Ulitsa Nizhnaya Siromyatnicheskaya, 10/3, metro Kurskaya, +7-965-233-7768) Works from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily; not necessary to call in advance.	Small volumes: None, but Sfera Ekologii will provide free pick up if you collect more than 500 kilograms of recyclable waste, including paper. Large volumes: Prices range from 8,000 to 16,000 rubles per ton (average market prices)	Ideally, rinse and flatten plastic containers before delivery. The collection point does not accepts plastic that has recycling markers numbered 7, 5, or no marker at all. You can also drop off glass, paper and nonferrous scrap metal at this location.

Lena Smirnova / MT

Contact the author at e.smirnova@imedia.ru

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