

Memo

TO: Marcos Gonzalez and Janice Ehlemeyer, RiverCOG
FROM: Caitlyn Wouters and Kristen Weiland, RRS
DATE: January 15, 2026
RE: RiverCOG Data Updates

Background and Introduction

At the request of the Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments (RiverCOG), RRS and HDR conducted a comprehensive assessment of the region's waste disposal systems in 2025. As part of this effort, the consultant team analyzed an aggregated dataset for Fiscal Year 2023 (July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023), representing the most recent full year of available data.

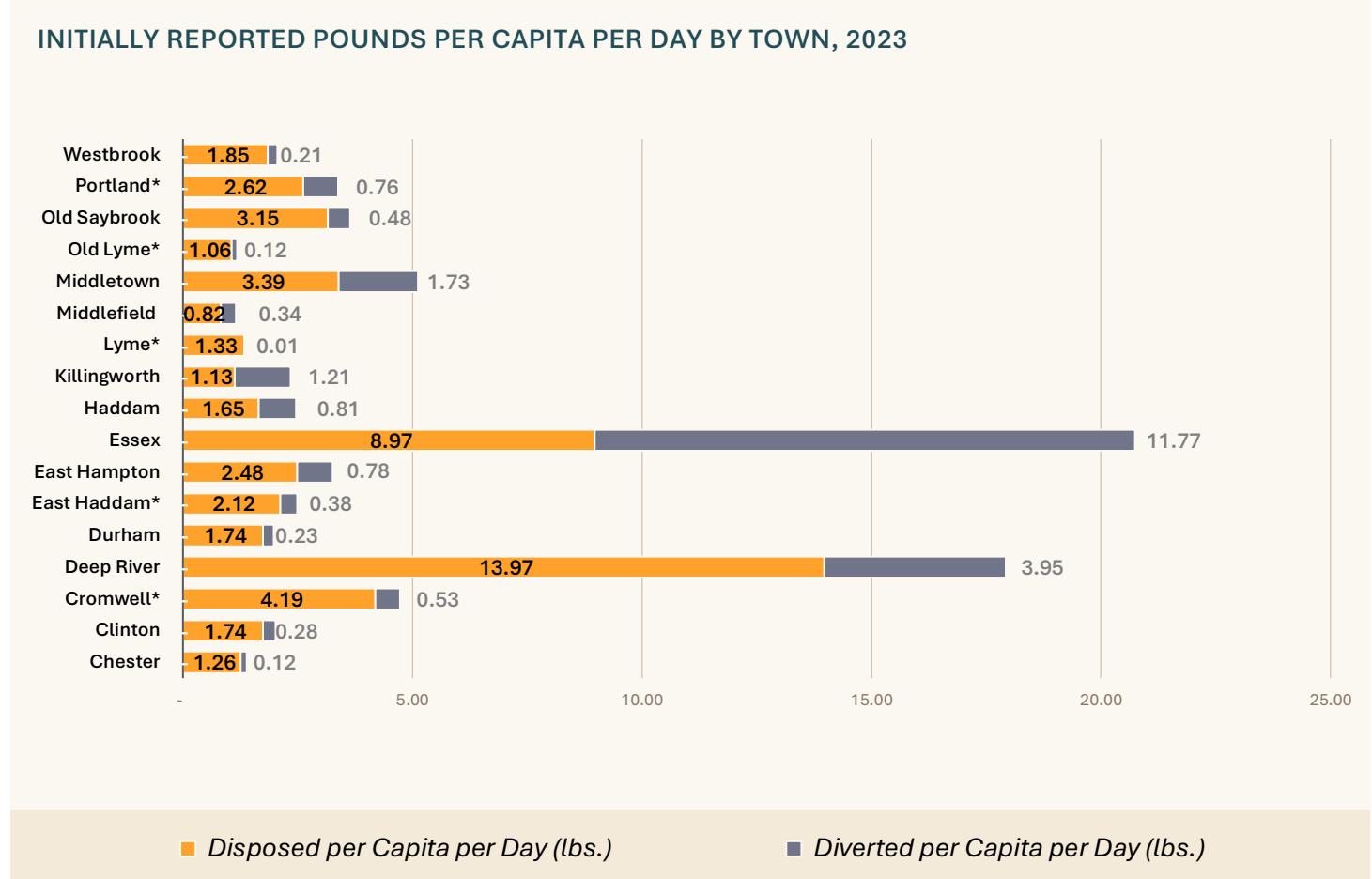
The dataset was provided by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) and includes reports from in-state resource recovery facilities (RRFs), multi-town transfer stations, and the Annual Municipal Recycling Report (AMRR) system for municipalities that transfer waste directly out of state. Recycling data was compiled from in-state recycling and composting facilities and supplemented by municipal reports of additional recycling activities. Prior to release, DEEP conducted data-cleaning procedures to address known issues such as double-counting of materials reported by both municipalities and receiving facilities. Nevertheless, some limitations remain, including incomplete identification of originating municipalities and potential reporting errors related to data entry or material classification.

Initial analysis of the FY 2023 dataset indicated unusually high per capita waste generation for the towns of Essex and Deep River. These preliminary findings are shown in Chart 1. RRS noted at the time that per capita waste metrics can be influenced by a range of local factors, including commercial and institutional activity, shared infrastructure arrangements and broader socioeconomic characteristics. As a result, such metrics should be interpreted as indicative rather than definitive measures of household waste behavior.

Because the consultant team relied exclusively on the aggregated dataset provided by DEEP, without making independent adjustments, all findings in this memo should be understood as reflecting reported data and any subsequent corrections verified through follow-up with DEEP.

Following the presentation of the initial findings, participants requested additional detail regarding the unusually high per capita waste figures reported for Essex and Deep River. This memo summarizes the results of those follow-up inquiries and analyses.

Chart 1: Per Capita Generation and Disposal by Town, 2023¹



Essex

In the reported dataset, the town of Essex was shown as having sent 9,139.56 tons of MSW (municipal and commercial waste) to the Preston RRF in FY 2023, a figure that is uncharacteristically high when compared to the town's population. Through follow-up communication with DEEP, it was determined that **this tonnage was incorrectly attributed to the town of Essex and should instead have been attributed to the multi-town Essex Transfer Station.**

¹Data for this chart compiled from the DEEP-provided aggregated dataset and population demographics provided by RiverCOG, presented here as initially reported. Towns marked with an asterisk did not submit an AMRR to DEEP in FY 2023.

Correcting this attribution reduced the total MSW tonnage assigned to the town of Essex from 11,073.21 tons to 1,933.65 tons. In addition, the dataset indicated that Essex sent 12,350 tons of textiles to Bay State Textiles; however, **this figure should have been reported as 12,350 pounds, or 6.16 tons**. Correcting this error reduced Essex's reported diverted tonnage from 16,935.65 tons to 4,591.81 tons.

Together, these corrections reduced the town of Essex's estimated waste generation from approximately 20 pounds per person per day to approximately 3.34 pounds per person per day.

Deep River

Similar to Essex, the dataset indicated that Preston RRF received an unusually high amount of MSW from the town of Deep River in FY 2023. Upon further investigation, the consultant team identified a likely reporting discrepancy but was **unable to conclusively determine a corrected tonnage for that year**.

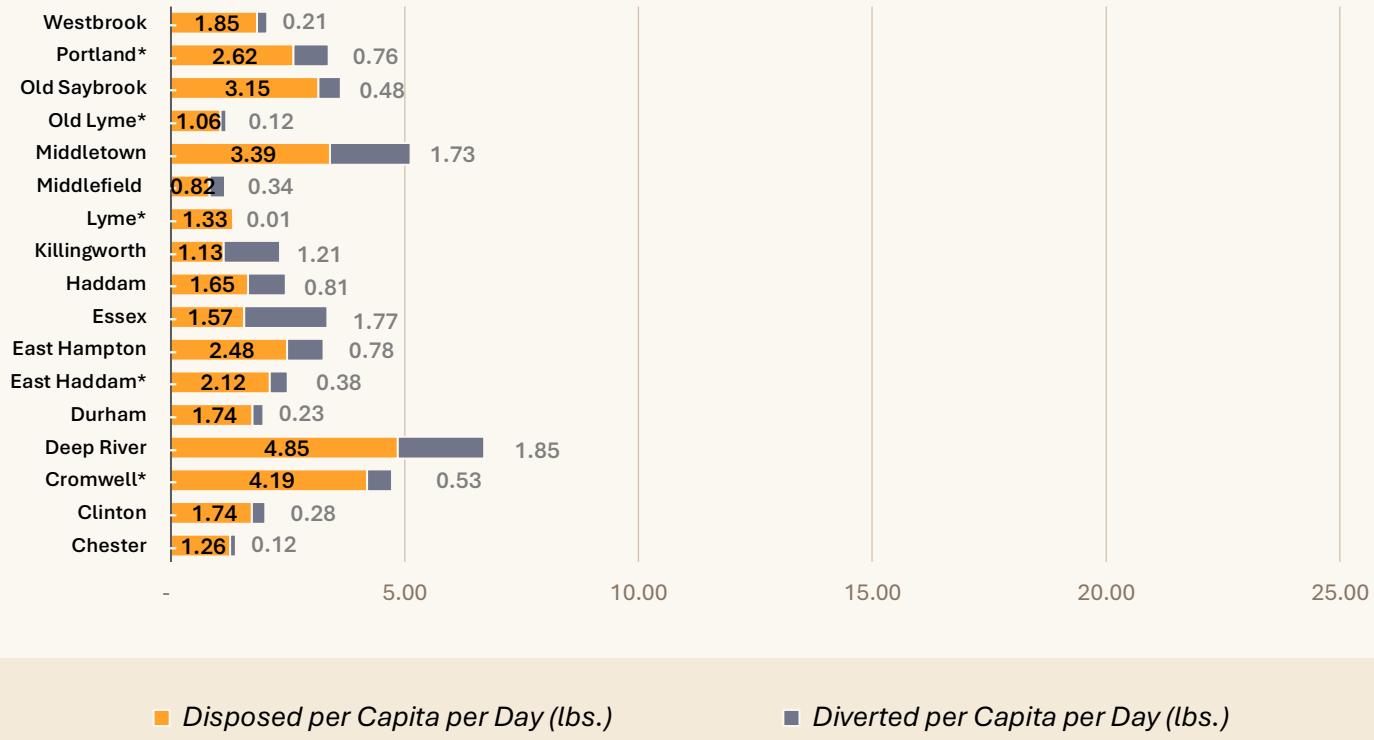
Preston RRF reported receiving 8,813.76 tons of MSW from Deep River in FY 2023. Notably, the facility did not report receiving any MSW from the multi-town Eastern Transfer Station located within Deep River during the same period. It is possible, though not verifiable, that some or all of the MSW reported as originating from Deep River was actually delivered to Preston RRF from the Eastern Transfer Station. DEEP provided RRS with scanned copies of the original facility reports, confirming that the data reflects figures as reported by the facility.

In the absence of verifiable adjusted data for FY 2023, RRS estimated Deep River's waste generation using average reported tonnages from 2019–2022, excluding the anomalous year of 2023. These averages were applied across MSW, WIWO (commingled) recyclables, additional recyclables, and organics. This approach resulted in an estimated MSW tonnage of 3,919 tons (reduced from approximately 11,300 tons) and a diverted tonnage of 1,497 tons (reduced from 3,194 tons).

Using these adjusted estimates, Deep River's waste generation equates to approximately **6.7 pounds per person per day, compared to the originally reported value of 17.92 pounds per person per day**.

Chart 2: Adjusted Per Capita Generation and Disposal by Town, 2023²

² Data for this chart compiled from the DEEP-provided aggregated dataset and population demographics provided by RiverCOG, presented here with adjusted tonnages for Essex resulting from data corrections, and using 2019–2022 average reported tonnages for Deep River. Towns marked with an asterisk did not submit an AMRR to DEEP in FY 2023.

ADJUSTED POUNDS PER CAPITA PER DAY BY TOWN, 2023


RiverCOG Averages 2019 – 2022

Table 1 presents average annual reported tonnages for each RiverCOG municipality for the period 2019–2022, based on the aggregated dataset provided by DEEP. Several municipalities did not submit AMRRs in one or more years during this period; as a result, averages reflect only the reported data as provided by DEEP.

Table 1: 2019 – 2022 Average Annual Tonnages Reported to DEEP

	2019 - 2022 AVERAGE TOTAL TONS MSW DISPOSED	2019 - 2022 AVERAGE TOTAL WIWO RECYCLING	2019 -2022 AVERAGE TOTAL ADDITIONAL (NONWIWO) RECYCLING	2019 -2022 AVERAGE TOTAL COMPOSTABLE	2019 - 2022 AVERAGE TOTAL TONS DIVERTED	2019 - 2022 AVERAGE DIVERSION RATE
Chester	1,116.49	412.85	6.72	17.75	437.32	28.1%
Clinton	7,690.56	1,363.37	60.53	342.25	1,766.14	18.7%
Cromwell	8,387.92	1,467.40	38.40	283.04	1,788.83	17.6%
Deep River	3,918.84	720.00	760.59	16.44	1,497.02	27.6%
Durham	3,663.16	614.96	52.67	811.81	1,479.44	28.8%
East Haddam	3,433.38	909.14	64.83	139.25	1,113.22	24.5%
East Hampton	6,471.36	1,263.03	61.01	350.22	1,674.27	20.6%
Essex	3,063.11	1,386.81	69.41	1,321.10	2,777.32	47.6%
Haddam	3,493.71	556.71	490.83	950.70	1,998.25	36.4%
Killingworth	1,845.95	192.90	450.41	-	643.31	25.8%
Lyme	772.77	3,929.72	13.30	95.38	4,038.39	83.9%
Middlefield	2,114.21	342.64	31.23	486.34	860.20	28.9%
Middletown	30,234.41	5,209.09	1,022.88	7,478.19	13,710.17	31.2%
Old Lyme	3,943.65	519.59	41.88	509.55	1,071.01	21.4%
Old Saybrook	8,635.47	969.09	214.79	448.38	1,632.27	15.9%
Portland	4,120.23	1,122.04	45.41	0.47	1,167.92	22.1%
Westbrook	3,325.30	243.06	57.08	1,266.96	1,567.10	32.0%
Total	96,230.52	21,222.40	3,481.96	14,517.83	39,222.19	29.0%