

Solutions for Food Loss in the State of Maine

“A Sustainable Approach to Food Waste Management: The Triple Bottom Line for Food Producers in Maine and Beyond”

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May 2020

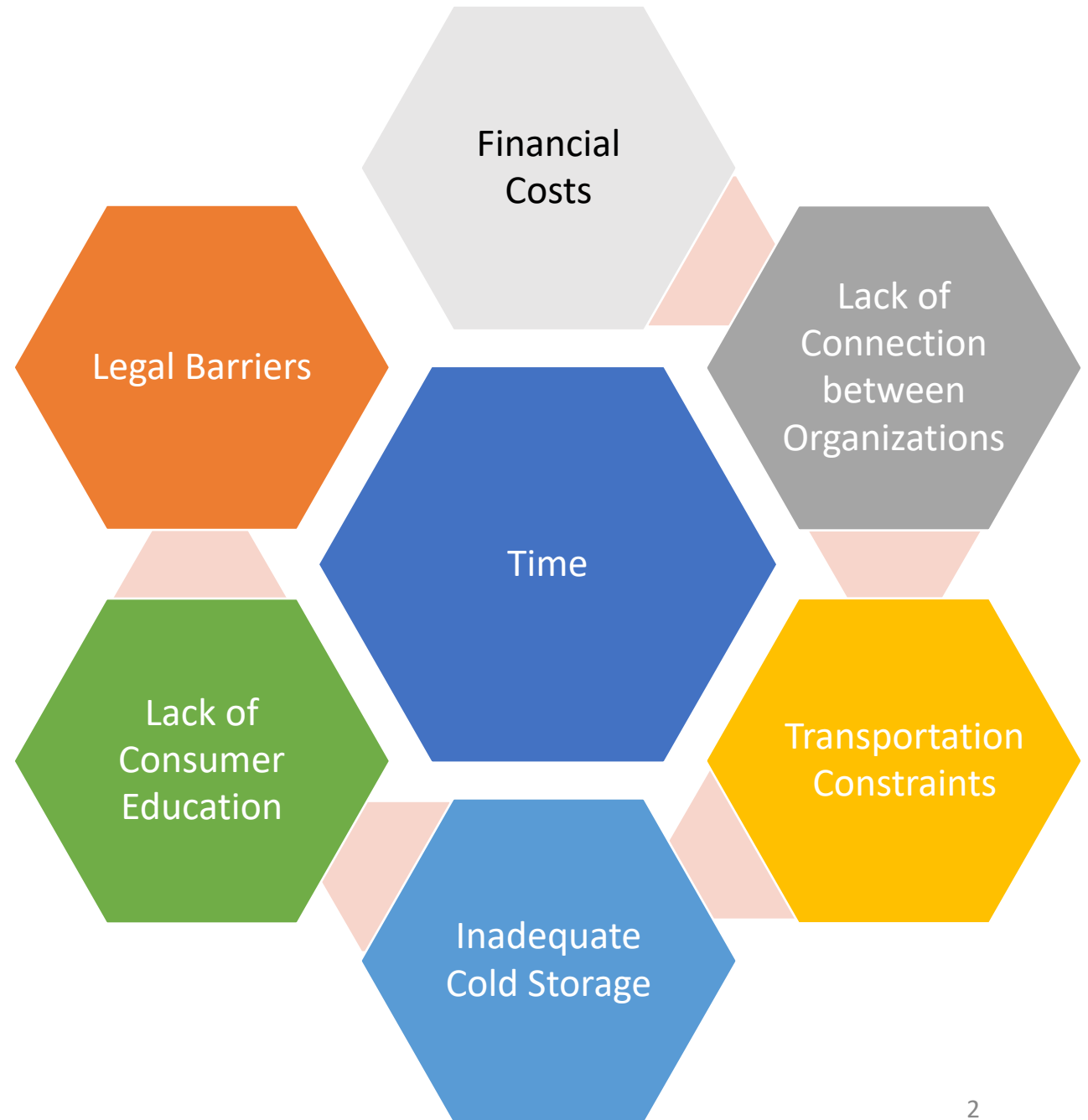


Senator George J. Mitchell
Center for Sustainability Solutions

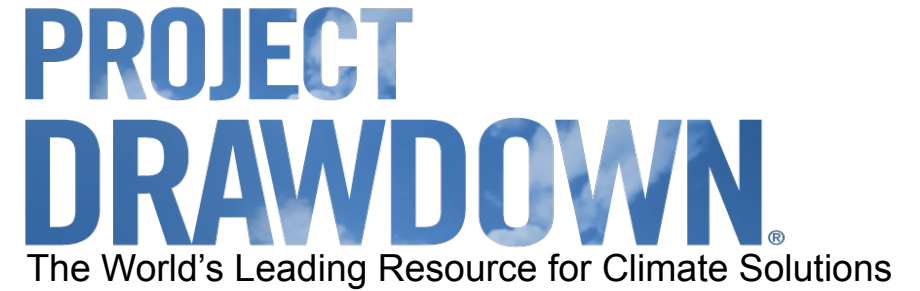
Our Stakeholder Insights

Maine Food Production Leadership Council

*What's preventing a
successful food waste
system in Maine?*



Our Best Practices Research – Global and National



**GLOBAL FOOD WASTE MANAGEMENT:
AN IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE FOR CITIES**



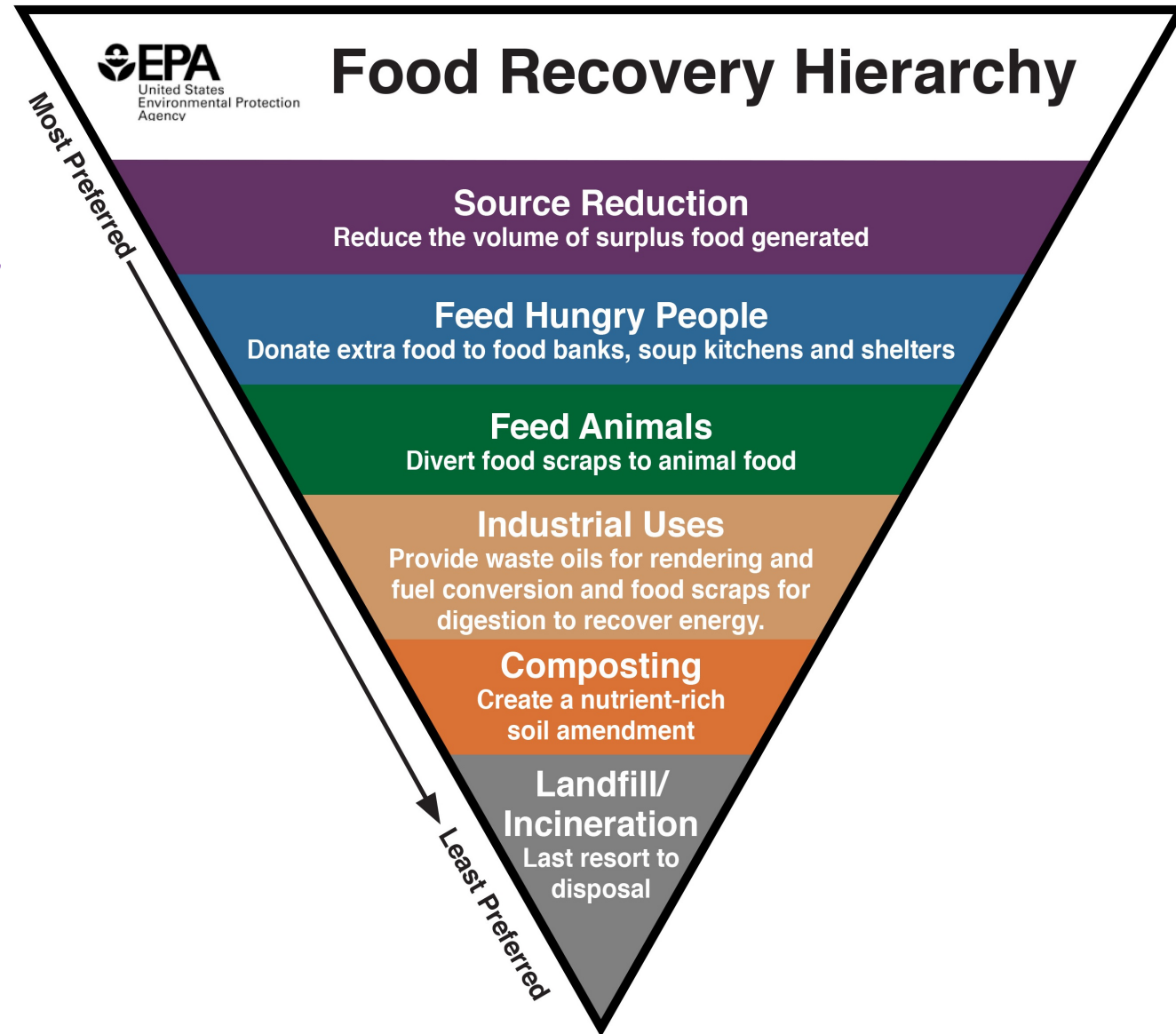
SDG 12.3: “By 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses”

Recommended EPA Food Recovery Hierarchy

#1 “Reduction”

#2 “Recovery”

#3 “Recycling”





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Strategic Recommendation

Goal:

To reduce Maine's food waste 50% by 2030 (USDA/EPA goal)

Primary Target:

Maine's leading food producing organizations

Strategy:

Profitable, easy to implement, best practice-based food loss solutions

- o *Support EPA food recovery hierarchy*
- o *Deliver triple bottom line benefits*
- o *Provide post-Covid19 resilience*



Our Strategic Maine Food System Recommendation Benefits



Triple Bottom Line

Profits, People, and Planet

Reducing food loss and waste is a “triple win.” Reductions can save money for farmers, companies, and households.

Wasting less means feeding more. And reductions alleviate pressure on climate, water, and land resources.

Champions12.3

On a national basis, these strategic food waste solutions would deliver these benefits:

\$10 BILLION OF ECONOMIC VALUE

1.8 BILLION MEALS SAVED

1.8 TRILLION GALLONS OF WATER SAVED ANNUALLY

18 MILLION TONS OF GHG EMISSIONS REDUCED ANNUALLY

\$1.9 BILLION ANNUAL BUSINESS PROFIT POTENTIAL

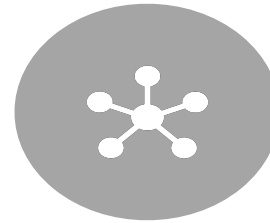
\$5.6 BILLION ANNUAL CONSUMER SAVINGS



Maine Food Waste/Food System Solutions



SOLUTION 1: ENABLE ALL MAINE PRODUCERS TO SIMPLY MEASURE AND TRACK ALL FOOD USAGE



SOLUTION 2: CREATE CENTRALIZED MAINE “FOOD RESCUE” MATCHING SYSTEM



SOLUTION 3: PARTNER WITH PRODUCERS TO EDUCATE MAINE CONSUMERS ABOUT FOOD WASTE



SOLUTION 4: BUILD MAINE'S FOOD HANDLING AND PROCESSING INFRASTRUCTURE



SOLUTION 5: ASSIST PRODUCERS WITH DONATION EDUCATION AND INCENTIVES



SOLUTION 6: REMOVE FOOD WASTE FROM LANDFILLS – SUPPORT PRODUCER WASTE DIVERSION

Solution 1

Track and Measure Maine Food Loss/Waste

The Problem

- Not enough data to make smart and effective decisions
- “What gets measured gets managed” and improves results
- Major untapped financial benefit from managing food loss - 14:1 return on investment
- Too many metrics and software options for tracking



The Solution

- Launch the Maine Food Production Leadership Council – “Measure to Save” Program.
- Use simple, established Food Loss and Waste Accounting and Reporting Standard with DEP tracking data.

Solution 2

Cultivate Maine Based Food Matching System

The Problem

- Variety of excess last-minute food available throughout Maine
- High levels of Maine food insecurity - #1 in NE and #12 in U.S.
- Strong reliance on large, non-local food distribution networks
- Many existing “food matching” software/systems but do not meet Maine needs



40% of perfectly good food goes to waste while 1 in 7 goes hungry.
YOU can help #endfoodwaste
and #endhunger.

Be a #foodrescuehero.



The Solution

- Evolve existing Covid19-based **Maine Feeding Partners** network into **Maine Food Rescue Partners**, a permanent, multi-platform communication network connecting: Maine “food available”, “food needed”, and “food rescue volunteers/transportation”

Solution 3

Partner with Producers to Educate Maine Consumers About Food Waste

The Problem

- A quarter of our food supply is wasted at the consumer level (Buzby et al. 2014).
- Food Producer "best by" date labeling obscures actual value of food and is confusing to consumers.
- Consumers do not understand the full value of produced food at ALL stages - water, labor, nutrition, energy.
- Consumers generally see food waste as simply good "trash" – it's natural.
- Covid19 has presented a significant setback to waste reduction efforts.

The Solution

- National Solution: Standardize “Best By___” Date Labels
- “Maine Food Rescue Hero” Education Campaign for Students/Consumers
- Create “Maine Food Rescue Heroes” Producer Certification Program

Solution 4

Build Up Maine's Food Infrastructure



The Problem

- Unpredictable availability and amount of fresh food and produce.
- Limited ability to store or process fresh food and produce.
- Shortage of freezer space, despite being the storage option in highest demand.
- Food distribution points – pantries, schools, etc - not open 24/7.
- Transportation is unreliable and not always available.

The Solution

- Identify areas for collaboration between Maine food system players.
- Identify existing excess storage capacity, food processing facilities, or transportation capacity.
- Calculate additional shared capacity needs for storage, prep, processing to develop a new shared central facility.
- Consider meeting additional workforce development and/or composting needs at central facility for added value.

Solution 5

Assist Producers With Donation Education And Incentives



The Problem

- MFPLC members have reported confusion regarding their donation options and liability protection.
- Farmers and other producers are often unable to afford costs incurred through donation processes
- Dumpsters and landfills are viewed as the cheapest and safest option

The Solution

- Use Solution 2 to help producers easily connect with food donation options.
- Educate producers about all state-level food donation tax credits/incentives.
- Educate producers on state liability protections – Good Samaritan laws etc
- Offer credible guidance from specific Maine state government agency – Attorney General, Health & Safety, MRS

Solution 6

Expand Access to and Adoption of Landfill Alternatives for Food Waste

The Problem

- Landfill costs in Maine are increasing as space runs out
- Evergreen Hauling contracts prevent savings from food waste recycling
- There are additional cost, space, labor, and health inspection concerns for Businesses
- Climate change impact and pollution and depletion of natural resources with landfilling of food waste

The Solution(s)

- Utilize centralized AD and composting facilities
 - Provide education and outreach regarding best-practices for waste consolidation programs
 - Prohibit punitive contract termination fees and "right-to-compete" clauses
- UpCycling

UpCycling



What is UpCycled Food?

- UpCycled foods are made from ingredients that would otherwise have ended up in a food waste destination.
- UpCycled foods are value-added products.
- UpCycled foods are for human consumption.
- UpCycled foods have an auditable supply chain.
- UpCycled foods indicate which ingredients are UpCycled on their labels.

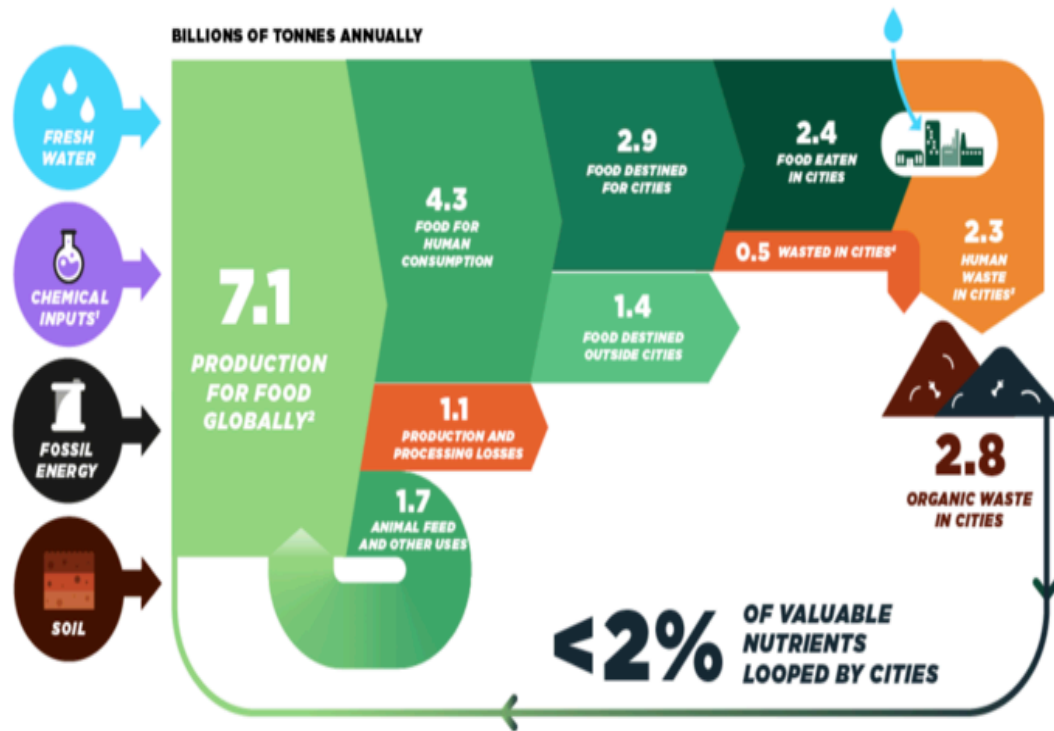
Waste to Wares – Maine UpCycling effort being developed by UMaine and Maine Manufacturers Association and supported by Allagash Brewing and MTI

Our End Goal: A Circular Maine Food System

As we eliminate food waste, we hope to move to a circular food economy that phases out waste and pollution through its design, keeping products in use, and regenerating natural systems.

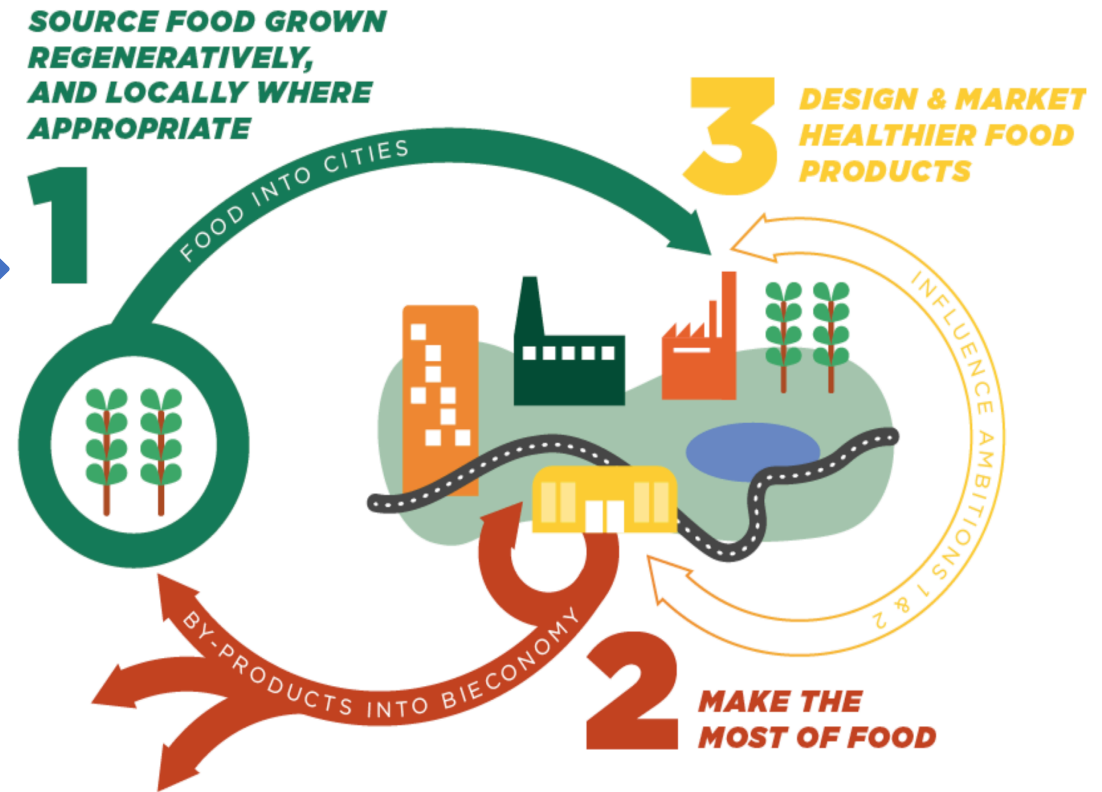
Our Current Linear Food System = BAD

The flow of materials in the food system is overwhelmingly linear



Proposed Circular Food System = GOOD

Three ambitions for cities to build a circular economy for food



Next Steps for the Project

Maine Food Production Stakeholders:

Share food loss solutions presentation with
Maine Food Production Leadership Council

Schedule a series of Zoom focus groups for
MFPLC members to give feedback

Develop and launch specific food waste
solution implementation pilots

Share pilots' success/case studies with
MFPLC and expand solutions