

Waste Management Policy Directions in Russia

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Abstract

The article explores the fundamental aspects of state policy in the field of municipal solid waste (MSW) management, the legal foundations, and the directions for improving administrative and legal mechanisms to ensure environmental sustainability and efficiency. At the present stage, Russia faces multiple challenges, one of which is the sphere of household waste. Household waste negatively affects both the environment and human health, and this problem has intensified in recent decades as scientific and technological progress has increased the scale and intensity of anthropogenic impacts on nature. At the same time, mechanisms for efficient waste utilization remain underdeveloped. This paper aims to characterize current policies in the field of MSW management and outline directions for their improvement in light of the existing situation in the Russian Federation.

Keywords: state policy, municipal waste, entrepreneurship

Introduction

At the present stage of development, Russia is facing numerous challenges. One of the most pressing is the issue of household waste, which exerts a negative impact not only on the environment but also on citizens' health. This problem has become particularly acute in recent decades due to the rapid development of science and technology, which has significantly expanded the scale and nature of anthropogenic environmental pressures. Meanwhile, progress in creating effective mechanisms for waste recycling and environmental protection remains weak.

The purpose of this article is to characterize state policies in the sphere of municipal solid waste (MSW) management and outline their development directions, taking into account the current situation in the Russian Federation.

Waste Policy Challenges

The problem of waste management is not new for Russia. The development of market relations has brought positive changes, such as entrepreneurship growth, expansion of foreign economic relations, and a wider supply of goods, household items, and personal hygiene products. However, these developments also contributed to an increase in household waste and related negative consequences.

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Despite legislative recognition of the problem, the state has often failed to take timely measures to minimize the negative impacts. For instance, one major threat is the moral and technological obsolescence, as well as low efficiency, of waste management technologies, particularly in handling hazardous waste. Certain Russian regions face significant anthropogenic overload, with increased risks of man-made and natural disasters (Kirillova & Musinova, 2020, p. 67).

Principles of MSW Policy

Given the importance of protecting society from the negative impact of waste, policy in this area should be shaped not only as an environmental policy but also as an integrated socio-economic and technological framework. Waste should not be viewed solely as a pollution factor but also as a potential energy source and raw material.

The policy of waste recycling is closely linked to transport and energy policy since waste recycling involves energy use and raises questions of transport safety (Kirillova & Musinova, 2020, p. 137).

According to the International Ecological Union, in addition to legislatively enshrined principles, corporate responsibility should be emphasized. Manufacturers should incorporate waste reduction measures at the product design stage and actively participate in waste management. Costs associated with waste collection and disposal should follow the “polluter pays” principle, where producers and owners of waste bear responsibility (Kozlova, Kusova, & Valeeva, 2019, p. 73).

Thus, MSW policy should be based on the following principles:

- multiple use and recycling of all possible waste types;
- implementation of a closed-loop system of waste generation and recycling (recycling economy);
- correlation of fines with the damage caused by waste producers;
- principle of “waste as resources”;
- “do not bury, recycle instead”;
- economic incentives for waste owners and producers, including tax relief for rational waste management.

Legal and Strategic Foundations

Since municipal waste has become a serious problem not only for the environment but also for public health, Russian legislation has introduced a special legal regime for MSW management, classifying waste into types, groups, and categories.

A comprehensive strategy for MSW management has been adopted in the Russian Federation. Its purpose is to improve living standards by adopting a systemic approach to waste management at both state and regional levels, while reducing waste generation and increasing recycling and reuse.

An important economic tool of environmental policy is the “polluter pays” principle, under which those responsible for pollution bear the related costs.

Administrative-Legal Regulation

Management in the MSW sector is a crucial mechanism linking state, society, and other actors to the environment. Using legal frameworks, enterprises apply business principles outlined in the economic code to household waste management. These include:

- compliance with mandatory business standards in the waste management sector;
- ensuring quality and safety of services in waste transportation;
- adherence to environmental safety standards.

Standardization plays an important role by developing norms and regulations mandatory for economic entities. New technical regulations aim to ensure safety, environmental protection, energy efficiency, property protection, and national security.

Thus, waste management should be guided by general principles of law as well as public interest.

Administrative and legal regulation requires the following principles (Zubarev & Kushnerova, 2020, p. 75):

- justification of legal, organizational, economic, and environmental considerations when planning, constructing, and operating MSW landfills, incineration facilities, and recycling plants;
- mandatory compliance with state norms, standards, and rules in economic and managerial waste activities.

These principles should serve a general regulatory function in the activities of public administration bodies in MSW management.

Conclusion

Municipal solid waste management in Russia is an acute social, environmental, and economic issue. Current policies reflect an evolving balance between environmental safety, economic incentives, and administrative regulation. The principles outlined—particularly recycling, responsibility, and adherence to international ecological standards—form the basis for effective reform. Further development of integrated waste management strategies and stricter enforcement of environmental legislation are essential for improving the efficiency of the sector and protecting both human health and the environment.

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