

MICHIGAN BAGGING LAW
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Public Act 264 of 1990, which amends the state's solid-waste law, regulates the owner or operator of a landfill or a municipal solid-waste incinerator who "knows or should know that solid waste to be disposed of includes yard clippings that are generated or collected..." and "...should not accept the solid waste for disposal." This regulation has two-tiered enforcement dates. The first was March 28, 1994, and pertained to "... land that is owned by a county, municipality, or a state facility...". The second date is March 28, 1995 when covers all properties in the state. Enforcement during the first year is not punitive, but beyond that, penalties will be sizable.

Prior to 1990, urban-yard waste accepted by landfills had been comprised of 20% brush, 40% leaves, and 40% grass clippings. The Waste Management Division of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) estimated that this regulation will reduce the total amount of material accepted by these facilities by 12 to 18%. The DNR lists alternative solutions as being regional or local compost centers, mulching mowers, and "selling the homeowners on the idea of handling their yard waste before it leaves their property." Additional practices should include increasing the mowing frequency, raising the height of cut, and applying plant growth regulators. However, this is one area where our research at MSU has been lacking, and one in which I hope to focus in the future.