

Purpose of This Toolkit

For municipalities seeking the completion and adoption of Ulster County's Zero Waste Implementation Plan (ZWIP)

A coalition of partners recently [**SENT A LETTER**](#) to the County Executive and Ulster County Legislature urging the completion, public release, and adoption of a comprehensive ZWIP before proceeding with large-scale waste infrastructure projects, such as the global NRG proposal.

Your municipality can take action by adopting a resolution in support of the coalition's letter. This toolkit provides background context through a FAQ along with a ready-to-adopt resolution template.

Quick FAQ

What has Ulster County done so far on Zero Waste?

Ulster County has made formal policy commitments to Zero Waste, including adopting Resolution 451 in 2019, which established the County's goal to become a Zero Waste Community. The County's 2020 Local Solid Waste Management Plan references the need for a Zero Waste Implementation Plan (ZWIP) to guide actions. However, more than six years later, a completed ZWIP has not yet been produced or publicly released, meaning the county still lacks a transparent roadmap for moving up the [Zero Waste Hierarchy](#) – prioritizing reduction, reuse, repair, and composting before disposal.

Why is Ulster County being asked to pause the Global NRG proposal?

In recent reports, the Global NRG project would lease UCRRA property to build and operate a \$100 million facility processing over 107,000 tons of municipal solid waste in 2025. Advancing such a major project before a Zero Waste Implementation Plan (ZWIP) is completed could lock the County into long-term contracts and systems that conflict with its Zero Waste policy.

What is the Zero Waste Hierarchy and why is it important?

The Zero Waste Hierarchy ranks strategies for managing materials from most to least preferred: reduce, reuse, recycle/compost, recover, and disposal. It provides a roadmap for sustainable waste management, to make certain that infrastructure and policies prioritize waste reduction, protect the environment and taxpayers, and prevent costly, long-term disposal-based systems.

Why is a Zero Waste Implementation Plan essential before this project moves forward?

A completed ZWIP provides measurable actions, timelines, and accountability to determine whether large-scale disposal infrastructure is needed. Without it, the County risks overbuilding expensive systems that could limit future waste reduction, reuse, and recycling efforts.

Could the proposal affect waste from neighboring counties?

Yes. Over a stated 20-year period, meeting projected annual waste requirements could require accepting waste from neighboring counties without their commitment to upstream Zero Waste solutions, further entrenching disposal-based systems and undermining local waste reduction efforts.

What does the UCRRA Reform Committee say?

In its [August 1, 2024 report](#), the committee recommended that, under [Executive Order 1 of 2023](#), no organic material should be sent to landfills or incinerators by 2030, and that legislation should require separation of food scraps and organics. This reinforces that a ZWIP must guide decisions on any major waste infrastructure.

What is the goal of sending this letter now?

The letter urges the Ulster County Legislature and County Executive to complete, adopt, and publicly release a ZWIP, and to pause major waste infrastructure projects — including the Global NRG proposal — until the plan is in place, and to ensure all waste management decisions align with the County's Zero Waste policy, protecting taxpayers and the environment while providing a transparent and credible roadmap for meaningful waste reduction.

Sample Municipal Resolution

Instructions for Municipalities

1. Insert your municipality name where indicated.
2. Share the FAQs with residents or council members to provide context.
3. Introduce the resolution at a board meeting for adoption.
4. Submit the adopted resolution to the County Executive at exec@co.ulster.ny.us and to your legislator and the legislative clerk at vfab@co.ulster.ny.us who will ensure it is distributed to all legislators. In your message, urge action on a Zero Waste Implementation Plan (ZWIP) before major infrastructure projects move forward.

Calling on Ulster County to Complete and Adopt a Zero Waste Implementation Plan Prior to Advancing Major Waste Infrastructure Projects

WHEREAS, On November 19, 2019, the Ulster County Legislature adopted Resolution No. 451, establishing Ulster County's commitment to becoming a Zero Waste Community; and

WHEREAS, Ulster County's adopted Zero Waste policy commits the County to reducing waste through responsible production, consumption, reuse, repair, recycling, composting, and recovery of materials, consistent with the Zero Waste Hierarchy; and

WHEREAS, More than six years after adoption of that policy, Ulster County has not completed or publicly released a Zero Waste Implementation Plan that clearly demonstrates how the County will transition from current waste management practices to achieving maximum waste diversion; and

WHEREAS, Ulster County's 2020 Local Solid Waste Management Plan references the need for a Zero Waste Implementation Plan to guide implementation of the County's Zero Waste policy; and

WHEREAS, In its August 1, 2024 report, the Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency Reform Committee recommended that, “*in keeping with Executive Order 1 of 2023, requiring no organic material be sent to a landfill or incinerator by 2030, legislation requiring the separation of all food scraps and organics should be adopted*”; and

WHEREAS, This recommendation reinforces that a completed Zero Waste Implementation Plan is a necessary prerequisite to legislation, infrastructure decisions, and long-term contractual commitments by Ulster County and the Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency; and

WHEREAS, Advancing major waste infrastructure projects prior to completion and adoption of a Zero Waste Implementation Plan risks locking the County into long-term systems that could undermine waste reduction, reuse, recycling, and composting goals; and

WHEREAS, Once materials are mixed together, they cannot be readily recovered to meet their highest and best use, and decisions that further entrench mixed-waste systems directly contradict Zero Waste principles;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT: The [Governing Body] of the [Town / City / Village] of XXX respectfully calls upon the Ulster County Legislature and County Executive to jointly lead — in coordination with the Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency and relevant stakeholders — the completion and public release of a comprehensive Zero Waste Implementation Plan; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, Such Zero Waste Implementation Plan should be consistent with Ulster County’s adopted Zero Waste policy and incorporated into the County’s Local Solid Waste Management Plan and other applicable governing or planning documents; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, The [Governing Body] of the [Municipality] calls for a pause on major new waste infrastructure decisions or long-term contractual commitments until the Zero Waste Implementation Plan is completed, a public comment period is conducted, and the plan is formally adopted by both the Ulster County Legislature and the UCRAA Board; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, The [Governing Body] of the [Municipality] affirms that Ulster County residents deserve a transparent, credible, and accountable roadmap for achieving Zero Waste before irreversible infrastructure decisions are made.

ADOPTED this [redacted] day of [redacted], 2026

by the [Town Board / City Council / Village Board] of the
[Town / City / Village] of [redacted], Ulster County, New York.