Successes and Challenges for Plastics Recycling

Green California Summit

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Today’s Discussion:

• Why do we use plastic?
• Review current state of plastics recycling
• ACC’s strong, ongoing support for recycling
• ACC is committed to being part of solutions
Why Do We Use Plastics?

• Reduce material use/weight
• Maintain freshness
• Economical
• Reduce greenhouse gases
• Reduce energy use

Plastics reduce energy use by 26% and greenhouse gas emissions by 56% across variety of applications compared to alternatives.¹

Plastics help keep food fresh, reducing waste and protecting products from farms to grocery shelves to kitchen tables.

Protecting the safety and integrity of the product are critical aspects of sustainable packaging.

90% of energy use is associated with the product and only 10% with packaging.
Plastics News 6/20/08

Kraft recently switched its classic Miracle Whip jar from glass to plastic

- The switch to plastic means fewer trucks on the road since six more pallets of product fit on each truckload,
- Switch decreased fuel consumption by 87,000 gallons annually according to Kraft
Some plastic packaging applications, such as storage bins, sealable food containers, refillable sports bottles and dispensers are designed to be reusable.

The durability of plastic makes it a preferred material for reusable items.
ACC and Plastics Recycling

• Plastic Division and members involved in plastics recycling research/education for 20 years
• Our members and the plastics recycling industry together invested $2B in research/infrastructure
• Pioneered research on collection efficiencies and sorting technology for bottles
• Funded research proving that ‘all plastic bottles’ programs increase participation and volume of plastic bottles collected
Recycling Success

Today, over 80% of U.S. households have access to plastic recycling programs.

According to US EPA data, over 4 billion pounds of plastic were recycled in 2007.

In 2007 more than 2.3 billion pounds of plastic bottles were collected for recycling.³

California CRV Recycling⁴
• Plastic Total  64%
  • PET      63%
  • HDPE     90%
  • PVC      19%


Non-Bottle Rigs—New and Growing

ACC is working to expand collection of non-bottle rigid containers

About 1/3\textsuperscript{rd} of 100 largest communities collect non-bottle rigids in addition to bottles

Over 56\% of Californians have access to curbside collection of non-bottle rigid plastic containers

Over 325 million pounds of non-bottle rigids collected in 2007\textsuperscript{6}

\textsuperscript{6} ACC 2007 United States National Post Consumer Report on Non-Bottle Rigid Plastics Recycling, Published 2009
Recycling of plastic bags, film and film wraps is growing fast.

In the US, over 830 million pounds of bags and film were recycled in 2007—up 27 percent in two years.

Recycling rate for polyethylene bags and film now 12 percent according to EPA\(^5\).

Infrastructure in stores is critical for non-retail bags.

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PlasticBagRecycling.org

The online resource for plastic bag and film recycling

Consumers
In this section you will find general information about plastic bag recycling including what material is readily recyclable as well as a list of retailers that offer plastic bag recycling.

Businesses
In this section you will find a comprehensive guide to plastic film and bag recovery. You can find specific information such as plastic film types, recyclers, and how to calculate the economics of recovery.

Recycling Coordinators
Since plastic bags and film are a relatively new recycling commodity, many businesses and recyclers are not yet aware of the option and opportunities to recover it. More information in the marketplace may facilitate recovery programs.

Recyclers
Let businesses and other commercial generators of plastic scrap film know about your services by listing in our directory. For information about how to set up a recovery program go to the business section.

Retailers
Consumers are increasingly asking where they can recycle their plastic bags. Grocers and Retailers can help through education, providing recycling bins in convenient locations, and listing in our directory.

Sponsors & Partners
Learn about other organizations that support plastic bag and film recycling.

>> Learn More

>> Learn More & List Your Store

>> Tips for Increasing Film Recovery

>> List Information
Plastics Recycling is Strong But Challenges Remain

• Too much recyclable plastic and other material is littered and does not end up in a recycling bin!
• Away-from-home recycling access is a challenge
  • Solution: Focus on educating consumers and increasing collection opportunities
• Communities have inconsistent educational info for collection of non-bottle rigid plastic containers
  – Solution: Standardize community educational messages for these emerging materials.
• Current economic crisis – materials are still in demand, although prices lowered
ACC’s Efforts on Marine Debris and Recycling
Recycling-Litter Prevention Partnership

- **Goal**: Place recycle bins on beaches throughout California
- **Partners**:
  - Keep California Beautiful
  - California Department of Parks and Recreation
- **Progress**: More than 500 new recycling bins, educational signage
  - 5 sites in San Louis Obispo
  - 6 sites in Los Angeles
  - 4 sites in San Diego
  - 3 sites in Monterey
  - 6 sites in Santa Cruz
- **Educational Advertising**: radio, billboards, buses
ACC Bus Ads in Los Angeles
New Creative

PLASTICS. TOO VALUABLE TO WASTE. RECYCLE.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PLASTICS INNOVATORS OF THE AMERICAN CHEMISTRY COUNCIL.
• California Department of Transportation joining the partnership in 2009.
  – Add recycling bins at rest stops.
ACC Supports AB 1141

• AB 1141 highlights
  – Reduce bag waste by 50% by 2014
  – Establishes a $25 million “single use bag extended producer responsibility” fee
  – Minimum bag recycled content 30% (20% post-consumer) by 2014.
  • Will stimulate demand which has been hurt like all commodities by the current economic crisis
Operation Clean Sweep and AB 258 promote pellet stewardship.

ACC and the Society of the Plastics Industry developed Operation Clean Sweep to prevent pollution of pellets.

ACC supported AB 258 the pellet containment law passed in 2007.

ACC supported AB 2449 plastic bag take back law.
Partnership with community recycling coordinators

• ACC can be a resource to help promote recycling
    • Contact us if interested in expanding bag recycling through a municipal drop-off in your community
    • Help promote bag recycling at drop-off locations
    • Contact us if interested in expanding recycling of non-bottle rigid plastics in your community

• We are studying current efforts to share success and avoid pitfalls
  • Case studies available later this year
Conclusion

• Plastics recycling in the US is strong and continues to grow, but challenges remain
• ACC is working to address these challenges
  – Technical assistance to communities to increase recycling and standardized education
  – Partnerships to increase recycling education, and
  – Access to more recycling bins in public areas

• Thank you