

Labeling & Media Committee of the Statewide Commission on Recycling Markets and Curbside Recycling

Meeting Notes

Date: August 20, 2020

Time: 9:00am - 11:00am

Location: Remote

Webcast: [Public Meeting Live Webcasts](#)

Present:

5 - Commissioners Davis, Dell, Donlevy, Schneider, Toyoda.

Absent:

1 – Commissioner Skye.

Committee Members

- John Davis (John D.)– Mojave Desert and Mountain Recycling Authority, Zone Administrator
- Jan Dell (Jan D.) – The Last Beach Cleanup, Founder
- Jeff Donlevy (Jeff D.) - Ming's Recycling, General Manager
- Ann Schneider (Ann S.)– City of Millbrae, Vice Mayor
- Coby Skye (Coby S.) – Los Angeles County Public Works, Assistant Deputy Director
- Sara Toyoda (Sara T.) – City of Indio, Environmental Programs Coordinator

Agenda:

1. 9:00 am (5 min) Call to Order, Roll Call, and Establishment of Quorum – Chair

Chair Jan D. provided opening remarks and took roll. A quorum was established.

Public Comment: None

2. 9:05 am (10 min) Public Comment Review – Items Not on the Agenda – Chair

This item was moved to the end of the agenda and then postponed until the next meeting of the Committee.

3. 9:15 am (5 min) Review and Potential Approval of Meeting Notes

Jan D. moved to approve the meeting minutes. Ann S., seconded. The meeting minutes were approved.

Public Comment: None

4. 9:20 am (10 min) Update from Recycling and Organics Committees on Definitions of “Recyclable” and “Compostable”

Jeff D. provided an update on the Recycling Committee and summarized the agenda items for the next Recycling Committee Meeting. He discussed materials as they are accepted by recycling programs. Jan D. will include an agenda item at the next meeting to discuss Committee recommendations based on how Recycling Committee is considering “recyclability.” No updates were provided from the Organics Committee.

Public Comment: None

5. 9:30 am (20 min) CalRecycle Response to Committee Data Requests

Danielle Osborne from CalRecycle provided an overview of existing California laws related to recyclability labeling and claims, primarily focused on labeling of plastic products with the term “biodegradable,” “degradable,” or “decomposable” and the Resin Identification Code (RIC). Christina Files from CalRecycle provided an update on the education campaign and provided resources for Commissioners. Dan Brown from CalRecycle provided an update on the Committee’s request for contamination rates in curbside recycling.

The Committee unanimously agreed to request a presentation from Baani Behniwal from Californians Against Waste.

Public Comment (for complete text of comments, see Appendix I):

- Baani Behniwal
- Wendell Simonson

6. 9:50 am (40 min) Presentations from External Groups

Dylan de Thomas from The Recycling Partnership presented on the California portion of their publication "[2019 West Coast Contamination Initiative Report](#)" (Published in April 2020).

John Hocevar from Greenpeace presented on their publication "[Circular Claims Fall Flat](#)" a Comprehensive Survey of U.S. Plastics Recycling (Published in February 2020).

Public Comment: None

7. 10:30 am (15 min) Introduction of Education and Policy Recommendations by Committee

The Committee discussed policies related to their subject matter, including labeling and plastic bags and films.

Public Comment: No comments were read

The meeting was ended at 11:09 am due to technical difficulties with the public webcast. A meeting adjournment notice was sent via listserv message and posted to the website. Items 2, 7, 8, and 9 will be continued at the next meeting, including reading outstanding public comments. The outstanding public comments are documented in Appendix II.

Items not heard:

8. 10:45 am (10 min) Next Meeting, Proposed Meeting Schedule for 2020-2021, and Agenda Items for Future Meetings

9. 10:55 am (5 min) Meeting Summary and Closing

Appendix I:

Baani Behniwal, Californians Against Waste

Regarding the conversation about the enforcement on the use of the term "biodegradable," the question was brought up on whether or not any groups are doing campaigns to enforce this law. Californians Against Waste has had an active enforcement campaign on this topic for 8+ years and has been working with the District Attorneys to enforce the rules around false claims.

Wendell Simonson, Biodegradable Products Institute

To the committee question on verification of ASTM standards for compostability, the Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI) provides this verification in the form of a certification and logo program that has been in place since 1999.

Appendix II:

Richard Watson, Richard Watson & Associates, Inc. (RWA)

Labeling materials for recycling needs to be vastly improved. The Committee should take up the issue of a universal labeling requirement that would indicate whether a product is reusable, recyclable, compostable, or trash only. The Committee should also take up the issue of requiring a minimum font size and contrast. Many symbols and tables require a magnifying glass to read. They are either too small or lack contrast (for instance small embossed recycling symbols on plastic medicine containers). Symbols and labels need to be in a different color than the product container itself.

Colleen Foster, City of Oceanside

Would it be within the scope of the labeling committee to not just address recyclability but also better labeling about best buy dates, etc. to provide greater transparency on edible food. Also, why focus on just household for recycling, where a major portion of contamination stems from the high volume of recyclable material generated by commercial customers. Our operations indicate commercial has some of the highest rates of contamination.

Kelly Cramer, How2Recycle

Dear Labeling & Media Committee Members: The intent of this comment is to share information with the Committees about the How2Recycle label program, in order to provide insights on potentially relevant topics for California's Statewide Commission on Recycling Markets and Curbside Recycling. How2Recycle is a standardized labeling system for packaging in the United States and Canada that clearly communicates recycling instructions to the public. The How2Recycle label can be applied to any packaging material or format, and tells consumers when not to recycle an item, and if special action is required in order to recycle a package correctly. Over 225 products receive a How2Recycle label every day, and tens of thousands of products in the marketplace feature the How2Recycle label. Over 275 brandowners and retailers are in the How2Recycle program, as well as an additional 90+ material manufacturers and packaging producers. Packaging specifications are submitted to How2Recycle, so that the program can conduct an objective recyclability assessment of the package and provide a custom How2Recycle label, backed by substantiating data. How2Recycle is a part of GreenBlue, a 501(c)(3) environmental nonprofit based in Charlottesville, Virginia. The goals of How2Recycle are to reduce confusion by creating a clear, well-understood, and nationally harmonized label that enables companies to convey to consumers how to recycle a package; to improve the reliability, completeness, and transparency of recyclability claims; to provide a labeling system that follows Federal Trade Commission Green Guides; and to increase the availability and quality of recycled material. The following public How2Recycle resources are available for the Committee's ongoing consideration and reference: The How2Recycle Guide to Recyclability (available at how2recycle.info/guide) Contents: -- Why the How2Recycle program exists and how it works -- What does 'recyclable' mean? -- What the law says about recyclability claims --

How does How2Recycle assess recyclability for each package under that definition? -- Currently under study for How2Recycle The How2Recycle Future Guide to Recyclability (how2recycle.info/futureguide) Contents: -- 'Core' versus 'recyclability-challenged' packaging explained -- Assessment criteria to achieve future recyclability -- Considerations for far future recyclability -- Considerations for substantiation data -- Recommendations for strategizing future recyclability -- Steps for How2Recycle members to achieve future recyclability How2Recycle Recyclability Insights (how2recycle.info/insights) -- This report provides a macro view of the recyclability of packaging today for the benefit of How2Recycle member companies and the general public. Additionally, this report explores the nature of the How2Recycle program's influence on packaging design, and includes high-level recommendations to the packaging industry about which interventions on packaging design might be the most impactful. How2Recycle is a part of Sustainable Packaging Coalition (SPC), a membership collaborative that brings packaging sustainability stakeholders together to catalyze actionable improvements to packaging systems. SPC's work is based on the principles of collaboration, education, and action. Over 450 companies and organizations are members of SPC. CalRecycle is a member of SPC. If the Labeling & Media Committee or the Recycling Committee would like any further information from How2Recycle, we are happy to provide it. Please feel free to contact Kelly Cramer, lead of How2Recycle, at kelly.cramer@greenblue.org. Thank you for your consideration, How2Recycle GreenBlue 600 E Water Street, Suite C Charlottesville, VA 22902

Wendell Simonson, Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI)

The Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI), North America's leading certifier of compostable products and packaging, is anticipating the completion of a document entitled, "Guidelines for the Labeling and Identification of Compostable Products and Packaging" in September of 2020. The objective of the document is, "...to establish consistent, category specific identification guidelines for compostable products and packaging that make it easy for consumers, composters and others to identify compostable products and packaging, and improve awareness of how to properly dispose of them." Compostable products and packaging exist to help facilitate the diversion of food scraps from landfills. Specifically, compostable products and packaging can replace non-compostable conventional plastic and packaging that is typically commingled with pre- and post-consumer food scraps. Non-compostable packaging is a contaminant in compost operations, and the threat of it keeps many composters from accepting food scraps today. In order for compostable products and packaging to perform their intended function, they should be easily and readily identifiable for consumers, composters and others to differentiate them from their non-compostable counterparts. The guidelines put forth in this document reflect the belief that a consistent identification strategy employed by product manufacturers and brand owners is the key driver in achieving differentiation and will assist in the acceptance of food scraps on a larger scale. Working versions of the draft document have been reviewed, edited, and commented on by a wide array of stakeholders groups including: California Compost Coalition (CCC), multiple audiences inside the United States Composting Council (USCC) including State Chapters and Composter Members, Compost Manufacturing Alliance (CMA), the City of Seattle, and Zero Waste Washington, as well as a number of independent composters and brand owners. BPI

would welcome the opportunity to present the document in its entirety to this committee once it has been approved by the BPI Board of Directors and made publicly available next month.