

Recycling Committee of the Statewide Commission on Recycling Markets and Curbside Recycling

Draft Meeting Notes – September 11, 2020

Present:

John Bouchard, Jan Dell, Jeff Donlevy (Chair), Laura Ferrante, Joseph Kalpakoff, Nick Lapis, Alex Oseguera (Vice-Chair), Richard Valle

Absent:

None

Agenda:

Agenda Item 1: 1:00 pm (5 min) Call to Order, Roll Call, and Establishment of Quorum

Chair Jeff D. called the meeting to order and called roll. A quorum was established.

Agenda Item 2: 1:05 pm (10 min) Public Comment Review – Items Not on the Agenda

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

- Gail Brice

Agenda Item 3: 1:15 pm (5 min) Review and Potential Approval of Meeting Notes

No changes were made to the meeting notes. Commissioner Oseguera made a motion to approve the notes. Joe K. seconded the motion. The Committee unanimously approved the meeting notes.

John Bouchard (John B.): Aye

Jan Dell (Jan D.): Aye

Jeff Donlevy (John D.): Aye

Laura Ferrante (Laura F.): Aye

Joseph Kalpakoff (Joseph K.): Aye

Nick Lapis (Nick L.): Aye

Alex Oseguera (Alex O.): Aye
Richard Valle (Richard V.): Aye

Public Comments: None

Agenda Item 4: 1:20 pm (15 min) Discussion of Policy Recommendations

Note: This item was split in three (5 minutes each), following agenda item 5, 6 and 7 as currently listed in this agenda.

Jan D. presented “Design for Recyclability: Plastic Bottles” regarding design guidelines for plastic bottles and packaging. Further, Jan D. proposed not selling plastic bottles in California that have problematic, harmful or incompatible components which can prohibit sortation, reprocessing and sale of the post-consumer plastic. These policies would not require taxpayer funding, can be implemented quickly, and will have minimal cost impacts on producers. Fundamentally, Jan D. had three key suggestions: a ban on non-compatible shrink-sleeve labels, a ban on combined metal plastic components (lids), and a requirement that all PET bottles be made of clear plastic.

Nick L. agreed with Jan D.’s policy change to prohibit shrink sleeves and other contaminants. He also asked for a comprehensive list of which types of plastic are and are not recyclable so that colored and clear plastics are not treated as equivalent. Chair Jeff D. brought up the issue of mixed material products (e.g. aluminum cans with a plastic shrink sleeve) still being considered as aluminum cans. A disruptor fee or a re-designation of non-recyclable cans and bottles into the #7 category would require beverage manufacturers to pay more and hopefully would be strong enough to encourage a change in packaging.

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

- Susan Collins
- Tim Shestek 1
- Randy

Agenda Item 5: 1:35 pm (20 min) Stakeholder Presentation – PET Material Quality and Reclaiming

Note: At the start of the meeting the Chair moved this from item 5 to item 4 in the agenda.

Chair Jeff D. introduced Paul Bahou, President of Global Plastics Solutions based in Perris, California. Paul B. described his issues with contamination in the recycled plastics stream including color contamination, direct printing on bottles, shrink sleeves, non-recyclable caps, and food residue all of which can lead to landfilling of potentially recyclable materials.

Paul proposed that metal, especially aluminum, should be baled separately at MRF processing to avoid potential contamination of plastics. Second, he proposed that a tax or fee should be levied on the producers of non-recyclable bottles. This would include many common bottles like those with colored PET (which have little to no reuse market

value) and bottles with a barrier layer between PET which discolors plastics during processing.

Chair Jeff D. asked if there is sufficient capacity in California to process all the PET from buyback centers and if there are alternative markets for colored PET. Paul B. confirmed that while there is sufficient recycling capacity for all PET, there is not a sufficient market incentive due to the current price of virgin plastics and that no robust colored PET markets exist on the West Coast.

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

- Doug Kobold 1

Agenda Item 6: 1:55 (20 min) Bottle Bill Payment Review

Susan Collins of the Container Recycling Institute presented on payments from the bottle bill program, issues affecting redemption centers, curbside recycling programs, and bottle bill program opportunities. She believes that increasing access to bottle redemption services will help to drastically improve recycling and redemption rates. Susan also recommended increasing the deposit refund from 5 to 10 cents and including alcoholic beverage containers in the bottle return program.

Susan noted that California has lost approximately 50% of redemption centers since 2013, and she believes this is primarily due to the current state funding structure for redemption centers. To address this Susan first proposed eliminating the distributor administrative fee. Second, she proposed shifting current financial allocations from curbside pickup programs toward redemption centers. Lastly, she proposed an increase in audits of beverage distributors which could recoup millions of dollars in funding. Richard V. voiced a hope that any Committee policy proposals should be coupled with funding mechanisms or sources like those Susan suggested.

Chair Jeff D., Alex O., and Joseph K. voiced questions about the specificity of the curbside pickup data and cost analysis. Chair Jeff D. suggested that payments to curbside haulers might be considered a reasonable subsidy for other costs they incur. Nick L. asked if CalRecycle has the authority to set different fees for the same type of resin (e.g. green and clear PET have different associated fees). Susan was not certain but believed that type of fee structure would require a statutory change.

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

- Doug Kobold 2

Agenda Item 7: 2:15 (20 min) Review Acceptable Material List

Chair Jeff D. and Jan D. presented on a combined list of acceptable recyclable materials across California. A centralized list should help improve education, and local jurisdictions or MRFs could add additional items per local capabilities. The list was informed by a comprehensive survey of California's 76 MRFs for 70 consumer items. A total of 14 items passed the test for recyclability across the state. This matrix of acceptable materials will be sent to the full Committee members for the September 18th meeting.

Nick L. requested a discussion on the tension between a simple list for communication and a more comprehensive message that keeps non-recyclable products from piggybacking on known recyclable materials. For example, PET meets the definition of recyclable yet non-clear PET gets counted as recyclable when it often ends up in the landfill.

Paul Bahou asked about plastic clam shells and their recyclability and potential inclusion in this list. Chair Jeff D. responded that many items did not meet the test requirements about proper item separation and separate sales. He provided a second example of shredded paper and explained that it also could not make the list even though it is frequently recycled because MRFs are not separating, baling, and selling it separately from other paper recycling.

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

- Tim Shestek 2 (will be read at September 18 meeting)
- John J Cook (will be read at September 18 meeting)
- Doug Kobold 3

Commissioners were notified that the webcast had momentarily lost service but the server was being restarted at approximately 2:53 PM. The meeting was paused until the server was restored. CalRecycle staff emailed via listserv and posted a Notice of Adjournment for this item due to outstanding public comments.

Agenda Item 8: 2:35 (10 min) Data Review and Requests

Item 8 is deferred until the next meeting on September 18, 2020.

Public Comments: None

Agenda Item 9: 2:45 pm (10 min) Next Meeting, Proposed Meeting Schedule for 2020-2021, and Agenda Items for Future Meetings

On the 18th there will be a presentation on AB 54, a discussion on policy recommendations, and a deeper discussion on materials. Chair Jeff D. motions to extend the September 25th meeting from two hours to three hours, and all commissioners agree through informal tally.

Public Comments: None

Agenda Item 10: 2:55 pm (5 min) Meeting Summary and Closing

Chair Jeff D. uses a few moments to conclude noting that the public stream had cut out.

Public Comments: None

Appendix I:

Gail Brice

XT Green has developed a patented advanced manufacturing technology to recover resources from post-consumer carpet (PCC). Due to reasons beyond the control of XT Green, the construction of its facility in Rancho Cucamonga had been delayed. The company is now ready to move forward but may not, due to concerns regarding the availability of California PCC. This concern has also been submitted to the Committee by others due to the lack of progress by the California Carpet Stewardship Program to increase carpet collections beyond 29 percent. The following are policy ideas that would be helpful in solving this problem. Additional details will be provided upon request: 1) Require carpet retailers/contractors that generate 4 cubic yards or more of PCC/commercial waste per week to arrange for recycling services to comply with California Mandatory Commercial Recycling regulations. 2) Direct the State Water Board and DTSC to determine if PCC is a major contributor of PFAS in landfill leachate. If so, material should be banned from landfills or managed as a special waste with significantly higher disposal rates to make recycling a much less costly alternative. 3) Increase the amount of PCC recycled from construction & demolition (C&D) projects by changing the C & D regulations by establishing separate diversion rate requirements for PCC and other materials hazardous in landfills (e.g. drywall and manufactured wood) from high-weight, inert materials such as concrete. 4) Support California jobs by eliminating California subsidies going to out-of-state PCC processors if it can be demonstrated that the existing and upcoming California PCC processing capacity and capabilities meet California needs. Thank you for your consideration.

Tim Shestek 1

Will the committee be exploring the role advanced recycling technologies can play in creating new end use markets for materials, especially certain plastics? I think it would be beneficial for the committee to hear directly from these companies to better understand their processes and what complementary role they can play in diverting more material from disposal. I would urge the committee to set aside time at a future meeting for a specific discussion on this topic. Thank you.

Randy

Will the Recycling Committee be discussing or hearing from experts on advance recycling? Thank you

Doug Kobold 1

Do the plastic lids on the PET bottles create problems for you as well? Should all lids be removed from all PET bottles prior to being sent to reclaimers?

Susan Collins

California has different processing fees for different material types. The fee for PET bottles is less than one tenth of a cent per bottle. The fee for "other" materials is about 9 cents per bottle.

Doug Kobold 2

In addition to Richard's comment, I would recommend the Commission focus on the producer funding side. Increasing the deposit to 10 cents will help, tapping into excess reserves in the fund, will all help, but only for the short term. Getting the producers to change their ways and use material that has higher value when it reaches the recyclers, will be a better long term solution. Penalizing them for bad choices will also help the funding for better materials, but we can only hope that would be a diminishing funding source as producers make better decisions.

John J Cook

Have you seen the West Coast Contamination Initiative report produced by The Recycling Partnership? https://recyclingpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/The-Recycling-Partnership_WCCI-Report_April-2020_Final.pdf

Tim Shestek 2

Was the Acceptable Materials List presentation posted for public review before the meeting? If not, will it be posted? It would also be helpful if the background information (e.g. survey instrument/results) used to develop this list was also posted on the public website. Thank you.

Doug Kobold 3

Anyone else in the public lose video & sound for the committee meeting?