

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

Draft Meeting Notes

Date: September 21, 2020

Time: 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm

Location: Remote

Present:

Jan Dell (Chair), Sara Toyoda, Jeff Donlevy, John Davis, Ann Schneider, Coby Skye

Absent:

None

Agenda:

Agenda Item 1: 3:00 pm (5 min) Call to Order, Roll Call, and Establishment of Quorum

Jan D. brought the meeting to order and took roll. A quorum was established.

Public Comments: None

Agenda Item 2: 3:05 pm (5 min) Public Comment Review – Items Not on the Agenda

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

- Kelly Cramer
- Wendell Simonson

Agenda Item 3: 3:10 pm (5 min) Review and Potential Approval of Meeting Notes

No changes were made to the August 20 meeting notes. A motion to pass was made by Sara T. and Jeff D. The meeting notes were approved.

Agenda Item 4: 3:15 pm (30 min) Update from Recycling and Organics Committees on Definitions of “Recyclable” and “Compostable”

Coby S. provided a quick recap of the past two Organics Committee meetings. Presentations from several stakeholders demonstrated the magnitude of problems related to composting and the definition of “organics.” At the last Organics Committee meeting, Coby S. presented two draft proposals with Commissioner Lapis on the Precautionary Principle and Food Recovery.

Jeff D. provided an update from the Recycling Committee about CalRecycle staff presentations and the Recyclability Matrix.

Public Comments: none

Agenda Item 5: 3:45 pm (60 min) Introduction and Continued Discussion of Education and Policy Recommendations by Committee

Jan D. started a discussion about what the Committee is tasked with doing and presented a draft framework. The Committee reviewed public comments and expanded public proposals received in previous meetings. Commissioners requested more information about greenwashing as it relates to products and processes.

Jan D. gave a presentation on a draft policy recommendation – “Simple is Smart.” The proposal is to create a system including a simplified bin system, a standardized acceptance list, and product labeling system that is easily understandable by California’s large and diverse population. John D. recommended looking at SB 1383 regarding discussion on bins, since the statute has some requirements. The Committee discussed that the Recycle symbol include the chasing arrows and a “C” with a leaf be used for Compostable. The Committee deferred the decision of the Landfill or Trash label to the Commission.

Public Comments:

- Richard Watson
- Colleen Foster
- Arthur Boone
- Heather Trim
- Baani Behniwal
- Timothy Reynolds

Agenda Item 6: 4:45 pm (10 min) Next Meeting, Proposed Meeting Schedule for 2020-2021, Data Requests and Agenda Items for Future Meetings

Jan D. requested an update on the Public Education & Outreach Campaign from CalRecycle at the next meeting. John D. asked for the re-circulation of a link to the Request for Proposal and scope of work, including a schedule of tasks. Ann S. would like to discuss more details on local options for labeling.

Coby S. and Jan D. will revise the policy recommendation presentation from the meeting to present to the full Commission.

The next meeting will be determined by Doodle poll. Jan D. adjourned the meeting.

Public Comments: None

Appendix I: Public Comments

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.

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.

Arthur Boone, Center for Recycling Research

If they beat us up in the legislature, it's time for more truth telling. MYLAR: A 100% non-recyclable material. DIRTY POLYETHYLENE FILM: 100% non-recyclable; nobody washes dirty PE film in California except the ag film washer in Salinas. DIRTY MIXED RIGIDS: City of Berkeley takes clean mixed rigids (with exceptions) but nothing with food or other contaminants attached. Center for Recycling Research is developing wire mesh cages that stand 2 feet square and four feet tall on top of a four foot pedestal. At the top is the uniform sign, OBSTACLES TO ZERO WASTE, with smaller specific signs at the top of the cage for the material as mentioned above. Display points would be city halls, airports, building lobbies, etc. Project is in the final design phase; looking for trial locations to display. Thanks to Altamont Education Fund for funding early research.

Heather Trim, Zero Waste Washington

Is there a way you can include toxic chemicals in your labeling - i.e., something is not recyclable (or compostable) if it includes toxic chemicals that can transfer to the next product.

Baani Behniwal, Californians Against Waste

To clarify, California has not banned the use of chasing arrows on plastic products. They were previously mandated to be used as resin identifiers, and last year's AB 1583 simply removed the requirement. The Commission should instead recommend BANNING chasing arrows on anything that the department does not deem as "recyclable"

Timothy Reynolds

These proposed labels omit a few key pieces of detail the consumer could be confused on -- would not address what to do with all components, could be misused without a strict overseeing entity, would need an ongoing entity to oversee any changes in recyclability designation and to designate specific symbols on specific packages/components, wouldn't distinguish between lookalike packaging that have

problematic additives that would make some commonly recyclable items (like clear PET bottles) not recyclable, and would not be recognizable with any other labels on shelves today. Recycling labeling becomes really difficult when it comes to boiling down to only what the consumer needs to know (the simplicity you're seeking). How2Recycle is a standardized labeling system that clearly communicates recycling instructions to consumers. How2Recycle assesses recyclability on applicable law, collection (access to recycling), sortation (MRF package flow), reprocessing (technical recycling), and end markets for that material. Please read more, here <https://how2recycle.info/guide> There are hundreds of brands who are already members today, and thousands of packages in the marketplace in the US and Canada that utilize the clear, concise labels. <https://how2recycle.info/> How2Recycle also provides feedback to members on how to improve their package design to build a more recyclable package.