

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

Draft Meeting Notes

Date: November 13, 2020, 1pm – 3pm PST

Location: Remote

Present:

Commissioners: John Bouchard, Jan Dell, Jeff Donlevy (Chair), Laura Ferrante, Nick Lapis, Richard Valle (arrived at 1:05)

Absent:

2- Alex Oseguera, Joseph Kalpakoff

Agenda:

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

Chair Donlevy calls the meeting to order and calls roll. Oseguera and Kalpakoff are absent. A quorum is established.

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):

- Shirley Freriks
- Dan Domonoske (1)

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

Valle makes a motion to approve notes without changes and Chair Donlevy seconds. All other committee members approve.

Public Comments: None.

Item 4: 1:20 pm (30 min) Design for Recyclability – E-Commerce Packaging: Amazon

Kayla Fenton from Amazon Inc. presents on some of Amazon's packaging work, including the Frustration Free packaging program and the development of their new all-fiber flexible mailer. Amazon is looking to update voluntary standard on old corrugated cardboard from Fiber Box Association.

Valle suggests new policy recommendation: All e-commerce packaging should have amount of recycled content used in packaging printed on the package.

Chair Donlevy requests that Amazon provide some information on California in store take back programs, including 1) how much is getting returned through these programs on an annual basis and 2) what and where are the end markets.

Chair Donlevy will send Dan Domonoske's questions to Amazon.

Public Comments:

- Dan Domonoske (2)

Item 5: 1:50 pm (20 min) Design for Recyclability – E-Commerce Packaging: Sealed Air (Invited)

Terry Grill discusses Sealed Air's operations involving the production of e-commerce paper and plastic packaging. Sealed Air has done a circular pilot projects for retail takeback of plastic film in the United Kingdom.

Laura Thompson from GreenBlue discusses the Recycled Material Standard (RMS), a third-party standard recently released by GreenBlue with support from NSF International that uses mass balance accounting instead of recycled content.

Public Comments:

- Dan Domonoske (3)
- Susan Collins

Item 6: 2:10 pm (20 min) Policy Discussion – Plastic Waste Exports

This item was covered at the Statewide Commission meeting on November 4th.

Public Comments: None.

Item 7: 2:30 pm (20 min) Data Review and Requests

Chair Donlevy reviews the seven Recycling Committee recommendations that have been moved to Commission. He then reviews six recommendations that are pending and not yet moved up to commission. This includes the recommendations to add wine & spirits to the Beverage Container program and increasing deposit to ten cents.

Jeff will bring more information on density-based processing payments to next meeting and Dell will bring more detail on e-commerce packaging.

Data Requests:

- Chair Donlevy requests that Amazon and Sealed Air provide some information on California in store take back programs, including how much is getting returned through these programs on an annual basis and where the end markets are.

Public Comments: None.

Item 8: 2:50 pm (5 min) Next Meeting, Proposed Meeting Schedule for 2020-2021, and Agenda Items for Future Meetings

Committee would like to discuss Dan Domonoske's comments at next meeting and will report back on any further information gleaned from Amazon and Sealed Air.

The committee's next meetings are December 4 and December 18 from 1:00 – 3:00 pm.

Public Comments: None.

Item 9: 2:55 pm (5 min) Meeting Summary and Closing

Chair Donlevy closes the meeting.

Appendix 1:

Shirley Freriks

I believe you have invited Amazon to the next meeting. good! I want to suggest you invite Safeway to a meeting. I went there to see what they are doing about plastic bag ban. They are doing it and do have one plastic film box for recovery without a sign. Needs a big sign! But the bag they charge \$.10 for days it can be recycled 125x and is recyclable. Since I do not shop there, I was blown away with every isle was filled with a plethora of stuff in all kinds of plastic containers. I have pictures for those who also do not shop there but at small conscious Coops like our Briarpatch. Their Sustainability Officer is doing an excellent job at transitioning. They would be a good test case for the markets and what they will need to do about changing packaging. Thank you.

Dan Domonoske (1)

A modern Material Recovery Facility (MRF) sorts post consumer commingled materials from residential sources that are kept separate from organics and MSW. Acceptable materials included in programs should include only those which are practical to sort with consistent markets. Materials which do not meet both of those objectives should not be included in residential recycling programs. Post consumer MRF sorted materials should be high quality, which is often measured by three criteria: Out-Throws, Prohibitives, and Moisture. This comment is related to Prohibitives, which are a type of contamination. Prohibitives are any materials that are not desirable or usable by the end user. Industry guidelines and user specific criteria are used to determine at what levels prohibitives are acceptable, result in downgrade, or cause a rejection. For many sorted grades the

acceptable level of prohibitives (excluding hazardous materials) is 1%-2%. When amounts exceed that level they either result in a downgrade (ie claim for compensation) or rejection. In most cases a rejection results in an entire truck/container load of material being rejected, but in some cases an entire shipment (all truck/container loads on one Bill of Lading) is rejected. MRFs are not in the deconstruction business – we are in the sorting and marketing business. That means that MRFs do not dismantle or deconstruct materials. As such the packaging and retail business should not combine multiple materials in one form of packaging. For example, applying wax or poly to paper or cardboard makes the entire package unusable. The recent development of replacing plastic padded shipping envelopes with paper is a step in the right direction, but the question remains of how much % by weight the white non-recyclable padding is in relation to the brown recyclable kraft fiber. If the product is going to be included in residential recycling programs, then the prohibitive material (white non-recyclable padding) should be less than 2% by weight of the shipping envelope itself. If there are other prohibitive materials attached to the kraft paper, such as sticky flap enclosure glue or adhesive backed label, then the combined weight for all prohibitives should be less than 2%.

Dan Domonoske (2)

During the Nov 13, 2020 CalRecycle Statewide Commission webcast included a presentation by Amazon about their recyclable padded paper envelopes: “Fully Recyclable Mailer” was contradicted by the recognition that the white foam material is contamination for paper mills where it floats to the top and is disposed of. “water based adhesive” is unclear, does it refer to the white foam or the compound which adheres it to the kraft paper..... seems misleading to say it is the same as boxes because boxes use primarily water soluble starch glues “recyclability standards” with Fiber Box Association and the need for updated standards (load?) is irrelevant, what matters is when 100% of the material is supplied to a end user is whether or not they can use it Amazon should answer the questions clearly: what is % by weight of total contamination in their padded paper envelope Finally, all “recyclable” packaging materials must not rely on dilution with other materials to be usable by end user. Creating a product with high levels of contamination that is not in and of itself usable is not “recyclable”.

Dan Domonoske (3)

During the Nov 13, 2020 CalRecycle Statewide Commission webcast included a presentation by Sealed Air / Green Blue. Reference was made to the rFlex bales being made in PA with a pilot study which created flex/film plastic bales without markets and contamination levels of over 20%. However, instead of acknowledging the misinformation being spread far and wide, the presenter referred to the bales as having value – they do not. As anyone who participated in their webcast knows, neither RRS nor their participants were able to accurately explain their misleading our downright factually incorrect statements. Finally, the suggestion that MRFs need to modernize and get funding (so they can sort various non-recyclable materials that the petro-chemical, packaging, and brands want to keep greenwashing) is absurd. What MRFs need is to receive clean dry sortable materials with viable markets.

Susan Collins

It seems like the "mass balance" approach could be used as a way for beverage companies to comply with AB 793 without increasing their use of recycled content. The method would be used to take "credit" for recy. content used in other states.