



## PSI PACKAGING CALL SERIES CALL #3 SUMMARY

Key strategies – voluntary and regulatory approaches  
*Thursday, August 2, 2012*

### **Participants**

Over 140 participants, representing a wide range of stakeholders, registered for the call series. Refer to the [participant list](#), the [final presentation](#) and the [public and private sector goals table](#) for more information.

### **Welcome and Overview:** *Scott Cassel, PSI*

Scott welcomed participants, reviewed the key issues raised on Call #1 and Call #2, and provided an overview of Call #3 objective and agenda.

### **Panelist Discussion**

Each of the panelists was asked to address the following questions in their presentations:

- What are your goals, and what strategies are you undertaking to achieve those goals? (What barriers are you seeking to overcome? Why THOSE strategies?)
- Where is the financing coming from?
- What is the current status and timeline for your initiative?
- What is the most important mis-perception about your initiative that you would like to clear up for people on this call?

### ***Anne Bedarf, Sustainable Packaging Coalition (SPC), a project of GreenBlue – How2Recycle label***

SPC's How2Recycle on-package label is designed to provide clear and detailed information to reduce consumer confusion about what types of materials are accepted for recycling, improve the reliability and transparency of recyclability claims, and to provide a way for manufacturers to comply with Federal Trade Commission Green Guides. Eleven companies are placing the label on their packaging, and select government agencies (e.g., New York City) are also promoting it. Widespread adoption of the label is anticipated in 2013 in the U.S., and SPC is exploring the introduction of a Canadian label.

### ***Allison Buchanan, Alcoa – Action to Accelerate Recycling (AAR) initiative***

More than 70 representatives along the packaging supply chain met to collaboratively work on high-impact action-oriented projects to increase recycling rates for consumer packaging and printed materials by 20 percentage points by 2015. This voluntary initiative originally identified six opportunity areas, and four projects are currently underway, including a partnership with Keep America Beautiful and the Ad Council to increase awareness and consumer action by creating a social movement campaign for recycling.

### ***Joan Pierce, American Institute for Packaging and the Environment (AMERIPEN)***

Representing the North American market, AMERIPEN develops positions on issues related to packaging and the environment for purposes of stakeholder dialogue and governmental interaction using sound science. In the short-term, one of AMERIPEN's priorities is improving packaging recovery in the residential sector by

prioritizing three key areas: (1) increase access to *collection* to improve efficiency, (2) *engage with government* to influence effective packaging recovery at the local and regional level, and (3) increase participation and reduce contamination through *education*. As part of its educational efforts, AMERIPEN recently released a brochure entitled, [Discover the Hidden Value of Packaging](#). AMERIPEN is working collaboratively with several groups (e.g., Grocery Manufacturers Association, Alcoa's Action to Accelerate Recycling) to align initiatives and maximize resources.

***Nina Goodrich, PAC NEXT***

The purpose of this North American initiative, established as part of the Packaging Association, is to identify sustainable solutions that lead to zero packaging waste. More than 100 companies with varying perspectives along the packaging supply chain are participating in six projects underway: (1) system optimization, (2) material optimization, (3) policy best practices that support harmonization, (4) consumer engagement, (5) innovation, and (6) sustainable design guide. PAC NEXT addresses wide ranging challenges, including the inability of processing technology (e.g., sorting, etc.) to keep pace with changes in packaging design and the lack of policy harmonization.

***Susan Collins, Container Recycling Institute (CRI)***

CRI's mission is to make North America a model for achieving the highest quantity and quality of recycled packaging at the lowest cost. National recycling rates for PET, aluminum, and glass beverage containers have not improved significantly over the last decade in the U.S., whereas numerous countries with extended producer responsibility (EPR) laws (some also have container deposit laws) have demonstrated significant increases. However, the ten U.S. states with deposit laws targeting select types of PET, aluminum, and glass beverage containers have achieved much higher recycling rates compared to recycling rates for the same materials in the remaining 40 states.

***Paul Gardner, Recycling Reinvented (RR)***

This new organization is partnering with Nestlé Waters North America and Future 500 to advocate for an EPR solution at the state level for packaging and printed matter, with legislation expected to be introduced in 2013. RR's goal is to design an EPR system that is unique to the U.S. but meets core EPR principles of cost internalization, industry management, and government oversight. There are two common related misperceptions: First, many companies believe that EPR involves significant government involvement, and they won't have the flexibility to manage their own programs. Ironically, local governments are concerned that they will lose management control but don't understand that they still have an important oversight role to play.

***Paul Gardner, Recycling Reinvented (RR)***

This new non-profit organization, partnered with Nestlé Waters North America and Future 500 and in discussions with many other potential partners, is advocating for an EPR solution at the state level for packaging and printed paper, with legislation expected to be introduced in 2013. RR's goal is to design an EPR system that is uniquely American but still meets core EPR principles of cost internalization, industry management, and government oversight. There are two common related misperceptions: First, many companies believe that EPR involves significant government involvement, and they won't have the flexibility to manage their own programs. Ironically, local governments are concerned that they will lose management control but don't understand that they still have an important oversight role to play. RR has a white paper available upon request.

***Cathy Jamieson, Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation – Universal Recycling Law (VT Act 148)***

Vermont recently passed a law with sweeping changes to its solid waste management that provides consistent, convenient and cost effective access for *common recyclables* (but not all packaging types) statewide. The law includes a disposal ban on common recyclables, mandates collection at government-owned public spaces, institutes a statewide pay-as-you-throw (PAYT) system, and includes a landfill ban on organics. Although this is not an EPR law, the policy mechanisms provide a solid foundation to support the potential for future EPR legislation. There will be an economic evaluation and report to the legislature in 2013, including a recommendation on whether the beverage container deposit program should be expanded.

***Meghan Stasz, Grocery Manufacturers Association (GMA)***

GMA addresses packaging waste through five key pillars: (1) waste reduction (e.g., lightweighting, recycled content, recyclability), (2) address food waste, (3) change consumer recycling behavior by highlighting best practices, (4) understand the various options for managing waste in the U.S. (including EPR), and (5) coordinate efforts with other companies and associations. GMA will soon release a study on EPR conducted by Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC).

***Steve Alexander, Association of Postconsumer Plastics Recyclers (APR)***

APR member companies acquire, reprocess and sell the output of more than 90 percent of the post-consumer plastic processing capacity in North America. Without APR there is no plastics recycling. APR works with its members to improve plastics recycling by developing a rigids plastic recycling program, establishing markets for recycled plastics, improving polypropylene recycling, and targeting transport packaging from grocery stores. Access to a consistent supply of segregated plastics is needed to make the necessary investments to improve recycling.

**Facilitated Discussion:** The following comments were made in response to questions from participants during the course of the discussion:

- ***Vermont's Universal Recycling Law (Act 148) includes several effective solid waste management policy tools, particularly the inclusion of statewide PAYT and a landfill ban on organics disposal.*** Although agreeing with Vermont's focus on improving consistency, convenience, and cost effectiveness of recycling, one panelist questioned whether similar legislation is viable in all states. Another panelist remarked that this law is a 180 degree change from the legislature's previous focus on EPR for packaging and printed materials, since local governments, not manufacturers, will be responsible for financing the mandates. For example, the law requires away-from-home collection at publicly owned sites, but not at privately owned locations. One participant who supports EPR commented that, even though some states (such as Minnesota) have instituted similar policies, including statewide PAYT, recycling rates leveled off owing to a lack of sustainable financing.
- ***Several questions were asked about how an EPR law for packaging and printed materials in the U.S. would be implemented:***
  - ***How will EPR impact small recyclers?*** As with any business, recyclers that are most efficient and/or provide unique services will have the greatest opportunity to become part of the infrastructure by contracting with a stewardship organization on behalf of brand owners.
  - ***Under an EPR system, who owns the recovered material, and how will that change what takes place now?*** In an EPR law, the entities that possess the recovered material are the owners of that material. Each state would have its own unique transition plan to an EPR

system that takes into account the traditional role of local government and upholds existing contracts with waste management and recycling service providers. Refer to Recycling Reinvented's [white paper on EPR](#) for more information.

- ***What is the role of local government regarding collection, processing, and education?***  
Local governments may still collect, process, and educate under EPR systems, although they might also decide to relinquish some or all of these responsibilities depending on the agreement they negotiate. Municipalities will still have the power to license haulers and to regulate their activities (e.g., no trucks on streets before 7 a.m.). Education would need to be a collaborative activity between a stewardship organization and local governments. Owing to fiscal constraints, it is likely that an increasing number of municipalities will opt to do less and relinquish certain responsibilities, as long as service is maintained.
- ***Collaboration on various packaging initiatives among companies, industry associations, and other organizations is occurring to some degree, although there are still overlapping efforts and multiple forums for discussion.***
- ***As discussed on Call #2, clear and consistent consumer messaging is critical to improving recycling.***  
Participants made the following remarks:
  - ***Private sector messaging initiatives should reconsider using the term “waste” in favor of language that better communicates the value of recycling and changes consumer perception (e.g., materials management, etc.).***
  - ***Consumers are affected differently by positive “can-do” messages than from negatives “can’t-do” messages.***
  - ***The Recycle Across America initiative complements SPC’s How2Recycle on-package label in some ways (e.g., both use the chasing arrow symbol), but an opportunity exists to collaborate on the current inconsistent message on how to handle plastic bottle caps.*** Recycle Across America has developed standardized signs for recycling bins for governments, schools, and businesses that visually depict the types of packaging and printed materials accepted in a jurisdiction. However, plastic recycling images used by Recycle Across America show empty bottles and containers with their caps off, whereas SPC is promoting APR’s “Caps on” recycling message.
  - ***State EPR laws for packaging and printed materials can harmonize what is collected by each municipality, thus simplifying the message to residents in the state.*** EPR could, therefore, address a concern from brand owners that struggle with communicating what residents can recycle, since not all materials are currently accepted in every municipal recycling program.
- ***Several key factors can be attributed to why strategies previously discussed over the last 30 years are more viable or of higher importance today.***
  - The ***markets*** for recycled materials have gotten stronger, although there is still an insufficient supply to meet private sector demand.
  - Companies are responding to the ***increase in consumer awareness*** and demand for more environmentally-conscious products and packaging. In addition to meeting consumer expectations, companies can also save money on their bottom line by reducing packaging waste and making other improvements to their products and packaging.

- Younger generations in particular are **more environmentally conscious** and want to feel empowered to take action; they just need the right tools and information.
  - There is an increased realization that packaging and printed **materials have value** that we can't afford to throw away.
  - Many groups, both public and private, have conducted **significant research** and collected data leading to increased understanding in the field of what the baseline is, which policies work, and what needs to be done. The challenge now is overcoming political barriers to institute effective policies to drive increases in recycling.
- ***Any system that is implemented in the U.S. should follow the hierarchy of waste management to put materials to their highest and best use.***