

New Chinese Action Plan Targets \$287 Billion In Economic Gain Through Resource Efficiency And Recycling

Last week, China's National Development and Reform Commission announced that the State Council had issued a Circular Economy Development Strategy and Action Plan, which calls for increasing the resource productivity (the economic output per unit of resource used) by 15 percent by the end of 2015. The Commission estimates this would increase the economic output of Chinese industry by 1.8 trillion yuan or about \$287 billion (USD).

To implement a circular economy, the Action Plan calls for 1) building a recycling-based industrial system, 2) building a recycling-oriented agricultural system, 3) promoting low-carbon cycle consumption, 4) promoting recycling and greener building and transportation sectors, and 5) implementing a series of demonstration projects at the municipal level.

The National Development and Reform Commission announcement is posted at http://www.ndrc.gov.cn/xwfb/t20130206_526722.htm.

Norwegian Waste-To-Energy Use Increases For Seventh Consecutive Year

Last week, Statistics Norway, the government's statistical agency, released data shows that the country has increasingly relied on energy recovery to manage waste.

In 2011, Norway used waste-to-energy facilities to process 1.02 million tons of waste, up from 897,000 tons a year earlier - a 14 percent increase. However, use of waste-to-energy processing has more than quadrupled since 1992 when only 250,000 tons of waste was recovered as energy.

The data also shows that waste used for composting and biogas production fell to 400,000 tons in 2011 from 416,000 tons in 2010. In 2008, a record 455,000 tons of waste were composted or used for biogas production, but during the subsequent three years the level has fallen short of that record.

The Statistics Norway waste-to-energy data is posted at <http://www.ssb.no/avfhand/>.

Spanish Environmental Ministry Launches National Glass Recycling Campaign

Yesterday, the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Food and the Environment launched a national campaign to encourage students at 10,000 schools across Spain to source separate glass for recycling. The three-year campaign, which is budgeted at €1.5 million, is being coordinated by Ecovidrio, a nonprofit organization that manages glass recycling.

The Ministry presented the campaign as setting a foundation for future compliance with European Union-driven waste and recycling policies. About half a million students are expected to participate.

The Ministry announcement can be reviewed at

<http://www.magrama.gob.es/es/prensa/noticias/el-ministerio-de-agricultura,-alimentaci%C3%B3n-y-medio-ambiente-apoya-una-campa%C3%B1a-en-centros-escolares-para-promover-el-reciclado-de-vidrio---/tcm7-262821-16>.

Danish Government Report Discusses Possible Markets For Recycled Fiberglass

The Danish Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released a 24-page report last week that discusses possible applications using waste fiberglass. According to the EPA, Denmark generates 7,000 to 10,000 tons of the material each year, and most of it either being recovered as energy or disposed in landfills. The EPA is seeking ways to divert the material through reprocessing.

The report finds that waste fiberglass can be mechanically processed into granules that have thermal insulating and acoustic absorbing properties. It suggests that a commercial market may exist for new products using the granulated waste and it calls for research and development efforts to introduce new products.

Download the Danish EPA fiberglass report at

<http://www.mst.dk/Publikationer/Publikationer/2013/Februar/978-87-92903-74-7.htm>.

Seattle Plastic Bag Ban Not Increasing Reusable Bag Distribution

In July 2012, a Seattle ordinance banning single-use plastic bags and placing a 5-cent fee on recyclable paper bags took effect. In December, Seattle Public Utilities surveyed retailers about the initial response to the ordinance, releasing a report on the findings last month. The following information was gleaned from the 169 retailer respondents.

Most respondents said that single use (paper) bag distribution fell (48.5 percent) or remained the same (33.9 percent). However, a small number of respondents reported an increase in single use bag distribution.

Distribution (sale or giveaway) of new reusable bags appeared largely unaffected by the ordinance. Roughly about one third of respondents sold reusable bags before the ordinance and roughly one third do now. However, 53.5 percent of respondents said between 31 percent and 75 percent of their customers were brought reusable bags from home.

About one third of respondents said the cost to provide bags to customers had increased their expenses. Respondents also said the most common problem with the ordinance was customer acceptance of the five-cent fee on recyclable paper bags, although most respondents rated the problem as small.

Download the survey results at

http://www.seattle.gov/util/groups/public/@spu/@conservation/documents/webcontent/01_025117.pdf.

Pennsylvania DEP Awards \$17.8 In Grants To Support Municipal Recycling

Last week, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) announced \$17.8 in recycling grants was being awarded to 131 municipalities and counties. The grants are part of the Pennsylvania Municipal Waste Planning, Recycling and Waste Reduction Act.

The Act mandates curbside recycling in municipalities in excess of a specified population threshold. Funding for the grants program is derived from a fee on municipal waste entering landfills and resource recovery facilities. The goal of the program is to recycle at least 25 percent of municipal waste.

The 2013 DEP funding announcement is posted at http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/news_releases/14288.

Nebraska DEQ Awards \$1.7 Million In Litter Reduction And Recycling Grants For 2013

Last week, the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality said it awarded \$1.7 in grants to 55 organizations and local governments under its Litter Reduction and Recycling Grant Program. The awards total was an increase from 2012 when \$1.5 million in grants were awarded. The largest single 2013 grant of \$95,000 was given to the Lincoln Electric System to help support a waste refrigerator/freezer take back (recycling) program.

Funding for the Nebraska DEQ program is unusual - it comes from "*litter fees*" imposed on the sales of specified types of products, including glass, plastic and metal containers; household paper and household paper products; human and pet foods, kitchen supplies and others. The fees are paid by manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers to the Department of Revenue.

Get more information at <http://deq.ne.gov/Press.nsf/pages/PR020813>

Business Initiatives

French Waste Tire Compliance Scheme Calls For Tenders From Tire Collectors And Reprocessors

Aliapur, the waste tire compliance scheme in France, announced on Monday that it would be seeking tenders from firms and organizations interested in 1) collecting and transport waste tires and 2) reprocessing whole or crush/shredded waste tires into new applications. The contracts will begin on January 1, 2014 and continue through 2016.

The scheme said interested organizations can register on its web site starting February 18. The deadline for registered organizations to submit proposals is May 23 for collectors and May 29 for reprocessors.

The Aliapur announcement is posted at <http://www.aliapur.fr/actus/Aliapur-lance-son-appel-d-offres-triennal-pour-la-periode-2014-2016>.

Scottish Food And Drink Industry Launches Sustainability Program

Last week, the industry organization Scotland Food & Drink launched a five-point program to improve sustainability. Three of the points are to use resources more efficiently, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and reduce waste generation and increase recycling. Scotland Food & Drink will be coordinating the program with Zero Waste Scotland, an independent government-funded agency.

"With the introduction of new Waste (Scotland) Regulations next year, and the third stage of the Courtauld Commitment set to launch this spring, there's never been a more important time to consider the way the industry views waste - seeing it not as a problem to be dealt with, but as a valuable resource which could reduce bottom line costs and help meet customers' expectations around sustainability," said Iain Gulland, Zero Waste Scotland Director.

Get more information at <http://www.scotlandfoodanddrink.org/news/article-info/4202/scotlands-first-food-and-drink-industry-environmental-sustainability-strategy-launched.aspx>.

Biogas Industry Association Launched In California

Yesterday, the Biogas Association of California (BAC) held a kick-off event in Sacramento. The industry group said it is dedicated to promoting electricity, biogas, renewable liquid fuels, thermal energy and combined heat and power generated from organic waste.

"Organic waste sources include dairy and agricultural waste, food and food processing wastes, other organic urban wastes, wastewater treatment, forest biomass and water treatment gas and wastes," the BAC launch announcement explained. *"Using these sources for bioenergy generation reduces greenhouse gas emissions and wildfire risks, and diverts material from landfills."*

BAC says it welcomes bioenergy producers, suppliers, service providers, researchers and other experts, consultants, nonprofits and public agencies to become members.

The URL of the new association's web site is <http://www.bioenergyca.org/>.

The Green Perspective

Environmental Groups Call For Container Deposit Scheme In Western Australia

Last week, the Boomerang Alliance, an association of 22 national and state environment groups, released a brief report comparing the waste and recycling rates of five Australian states. The report shows that Western Australia has the lowest recycling rate and the highest landfill disposal rate among the five states. The findings prompted the Boomerang Alliance and the Conservation Council of Western Australia to call for the state government to implement a container deposit scheme (in Australian called cash for containers).

The report said that support in the state for a container deposit scheme had grown from 85.4 percent of residents surveyed last July to 89 percent last month. Residents that said they would

be willing to pay a 10-cent deposit also increased during the same period from 78.8 percent to 86.5 percent.

"Our analysis of Government data shows that Western Australia is by a long way the worst state in Australia for both litter and recycling," Jeff Angel, National Convenor for the Boomerang Alliance. "We urge all the parties in the election to commit to a container deposits pathway which will establish over 180 new recycling stations including 50 that will take a variety of materials, not just beverage containers. A modern system will be self funding and won't cost government or ratepayers extra."

Angel presented the findings to members of the Western Australian Parliament.

Get more information at <http://www.boomerangalliance.org.au/cash-for-containers/cash-media/104-wa-worst-for-litter-and-recycling-national-report.html>.

Deutsche Umwelthilfe Initiates Court Action Over Bioplastic Bag Environmental Claims

Last week, the German environmental organization Deutsche Umwelthilfe e. V. (DUH), said it was taking the German retail giant Kaiser's Tengelmann GmbH to court over what DUH said were deceptive claims about biobased plastic bags being good for the environment. Kaiser's Tengelmann GmbH is part of the Tengelmann Warenhandels-gesellschaft KG, which operates more than a thousands of stores across Europe.

According to DUH, Kaiser's Tengelmann GmbH has been placing the claim "Buy with confidence! ... With our biodegradable plastic bags." on polyethylene bags produced from sugarcane in Brazil. DUH claims the bags are being neither recycled nor composted so the claim that the bags are environmentally advantageous is misleading.

DUH, which has taken other German companies to court over environmental packaging claims, said it asked Kaiser's Tengelmann GmbH to remove the slogan from its biobased plastic bags, but the company has so far refused. DUH is now asking the court to intervene in the matter.

The DUH announcement is posted at [http://www.duh.de/pressemitteilung.html?&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=3028](http://www.duh.de/pressemitteilung.html?&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=3028).

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