

It seems that every month another California municipality or county passes an ordinance banning single-use plastic carryout bags. Therefore, it may be worth reporting that on May 19, the Ventura City Council failed to approve such an ordinance when it was up for a vote, even though the ordinance was similar to other local ordinances across the state and had the support of the California Grocers Association, according to a city report.

The proposed ordinance would have banned single-use plastic bags and placed a 10-cent fee on recyclable paper bags. It would have phased in with larger stores (with 10,000 or more square feet of retail space) starting on January 1, 2015, then expanded to smaller stores (with less than 10,000 sq. ft of retail space) on July 1, 2015.

The vote on the proposed ordinance was actually a tie between council members for and against it, and supporters of the measure said they want the city council to reconsider the bill in the future.

Get more information on the proposed Ventura city ordinance at http://www.cityofventura.net/files/file/meetings/city_council/2014/05-19-14/item%2013.pdf.

Statistics & Trends

Danish EPA to Provide \$2.5 Million for Chemicals Substitution "Partnership" Development

On Monday, the Danish Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced it has 13.9 million kroner (about \$2.5 million USD) in funding to launch a partnership among universities, research institutions, businesses and other organizations to create a partnership for promoting the substitution of safer chemicals in products. The partnership will operate from this year through 2018.

According to the EPA announcement, the goal of the partnership will be to establish "*a framework for researchers in collaboration with companies, governments and other stakeholders to develop and disseminate tools, methods, technologies, designs and business models for replacing environmentally hazardous substances and materials, thereby reducing their environmental impact throughout the resource cycle.*"

A public meeting on the project is scheduled for June 18 in Copenhagen, and the application deadline for submitting proposals is August 15.

The Danish EPA announcement is posted at <http://ecoinnovation.dk/emneoversigt/isaer-for-virksomheder/finansiering-og-tilskud/partnerskab-om-substitution/>.

German Government Agency Publishes Consumer Guide on Waste and the Circular Economy

Germany's Federal Environment Agency (Umwelt Bundesamt or UBA) wants consumers to become better at reducing, separating and recycling household waste. Last week, it published a 64-page consumer guide to help them do so.

Generally, the guide discusses the four highest levels of the five-level waste hierarchy. After a section discussing how a circular economy operates, the guide includes sections on separating and recycling biowaste, paper, glass, wood, textiles and household hazardous waste.

Thirty-four pages of the guide discuss German product stewardship initiatives including schemes for packaging, EEE, batteries, end-of-life vehicles and waste oil. The guide states that *"manufacturers bear the responsibility to design products so that they are recovered without damage after use or can be treated. Wastes must produce high quality material that factories can use and or else be utilized for energy."*

Download the UBA household waste guide at

http://www.umweltbundesamt.de/sites/default/files/medien/378/publikationen/uba_abfall_web.pdf.

French Tire Stewardship Organization Recovers More Than 400 Million Tires Over Past 10 Years

Aliapur, the French tire stewardship organization marked its 10-year anniversary on May 20 by noting it has collected and processed more than 400 million waste tires between 2004 (its first year of operation) and 2013. Many of the waste tires being collected today are recovered as energy, much of them through a contract with a Moroccan cement manufacturing firm. Aliapur said that was not the situation in 2004, but today it has more requests for waste tires for energy recovery than it can fulfill.

The organization also said it spends *"a significant part of its 8 million EURO budget"* on research and development, looking for new waste tire applications and improving the efficiency of existing ones.

The Aliapur announcement is posted at

<http://www.aliapur.fr/fr/actualites/2004-2014-aliapur-de-la-naissance-la-maturite>.

New Jersey Awards \$17 Million for Local Litter Clean Up Activities

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection said today that it is providing \$17 million to municipalities and counties to clean up litter. The largest individual award of \$355,479 is going to the city of Newark.

Among the activities the funding will be used for are cleanups of storm water systems that can disperse trash into streams, rivers and bays; volunteer cleanups of public properties; adoption and enforcement of local anti-littering ordinances; beach cleanups; public information and education programs; and purchases of litter collection equipment, litter receptacles, recycling bins, and anti-litter signs.

For more information, go to

http://www.state.nj.us/dep/newsrel/2014/14_0048.htm.

Portland, Oregon Launches Web Site to Teach Residents to Reduce Waste Generation

This week, the Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, with help with the Reuse Alliance and Chinook Book, launched a new web site that shows residents how to shop sustainably, reuse products, fix and maintain products, and borrow and share community products. The campaign, which is called Be Resourceful, is focused on reducing consumption and waste generation using some novel methods.

Among the activities highlighted are attending "repair cafes" in which experts teach residents how to repair products ranging from electronics to clothing or participating in a "tool share" or "kitchen share" in which products may be borrowed much as books are borrowed through a community library.

The URL for the Be Resourceful web site is <http://www.resourcefulpdx.com/#home>.

Business Initiatives

American Chemistry Council Supports Phase Out of Plastic Microbeads

This year, bills were introduced in several state legislatures to ban the use of plastic microbeads (an exfoliating agent) in personal care products. The beads are considered by some scientists to be harmful to the marine environment.

Some leading manufacturers, including Procter & Gamble and Johnson & Johnson, have already announced plans to phase out the use of plastic microbeads in their products. On May 20, the American Chemistry Council took a position on plastic microbeads, stating that it supports their voluntary phase out as a method to help combat marine debris.

"We and our members are working hard to prevent plastics from becoming marine debris by promoting proper use, handling, recycling and recovery of these valuable materials," stated the May 20 announcement. *"We support the efforts of personal care product companies to phase out the intentional addition of plastic microbeads as is consistent with widely supported legislation in Illinois."*

The ACC announcement is posted at <http://www.americanchemistry.com/Media/PressReleasesTranscripts/ACC-news-releases/Plastics-Makers-Work-to-Prevent-Marine-Debris-Support-Phase-Out-of-Microbeads-in-Personal-Care-Prod.html>.

Braskem Reusable Plastic Bags Made from Sugarcane Gaining Market Share

Brazilian-based Braskem is a leading global producer of ethanol-derived plastic (polyethylene), for which sugarcane is usually the source material. Earlier this month, Braskem said plastic bag manufacturer Nobelpack now has 30 retail clients distributing reusable carrier bags made from their renewable-sourced plastic to green-minded customers.

In marketing the bags, Braskem and Nobelpact launched a web page that shows the amount of CO₂ emissions saved as a result of the bags produced, highlighting the fact that sugarcane plants absorb CO₂ from the atmosphere through photosynthesis.

The Braskem announcement is posted at

<http://www.braskem.com.br/site.aspx/Detail-releases/Nobelpack--plastico-verde-da-Braskem-ja-e-usado-por-30-clientes->

US Industry Association Recommends Scrap Be Classified as Environment Goods

At a US International Trade Commission hearing last week, the US Institute for Scrap Recycling Industries (ISRI) recommended that all scrap commodities and equipment be classified as *environmental goods*."

"The United States has already leveled the playing field for the importation of recycled commodities including recovered paper and fiber, metals and plastic scrap, as well recycling equipment such as shredders, balers, shears, cranes, material handlers, conveyors, magnetic separators and spectro analyzers," said Joe Pickard, an ISRI economist, at the hearing. *"At the same time, U.S. exporters face significant trade barriers including import tariffs that restrict the free flow of these goods."*

"Eliminating tariffs overseas would clearly provide a significant boost to U.S. exporters of recycled goods and recycling equipment and would have positive implications for the U.S. balance of trade," continued Pickard.

Get more information at

<http://www.isri.org/news-publications/article/2014/05/15/recyclers-call-for-elimination-of-trade-barriers-for-environmental-goods-in-testimony-before-itc#.U3yjiHYQP7E>

Dutch Compliance Organization Is Concerned about Problems with Plastics in WEEE

On Monday, WEEE compliance organization NVMP (the Dutch Association for the Disposal of Metalelectro Products) published an online article about plastics, which the article called *"among the most dangerous and least recycled components in the fast-growing worldwide waste stream of electronic and electrical products."* It said that plastics in electronics and appliances are problematic because they *"often include additives to meet specialized needs such as fire prevention, impact resistance, flexibility or colour, which combined with other factors make them far harder to sort and recycle than e-product components made of iron, copper, steel or aluminium."*

The article suggested that the recycling rate of plastics from WEEE is roughly half of the overall plastic waste stream. It also stated, *"Well over 90% of e-waste plastics therefore eventually wind up in landfills and, in the worst situations, primitively incinerated through open burning."*

However, aside from suggesting that the range of plastics used in EEE production could be reduced, the article does not offer any other suggestions, such as requiring safer substitutes for hazardous additives.

The NVMP plastics in e-waste article is available for review (in English) at <http://producenten-verantwoordelijkheid.nl/nieuws/nieuwsarchief-2014/high-value-plastics-squandered-in-high-tech-e-waste.html>.

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