

The Bulletin - 5 September 2012

A quick scan of some recent waste, recycling and environmental developments from around the globe...

Regulatory Issues

New South African Tire Stewardship Plan Challenged In Court

Last week, the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) of the Republic of South Africa announced it will appear in the North Gauteng High Court next Tuesday to defend its selection of the Recycling and Economic Development Initiative of South Africa (REDISA) to implement the country's new tire stewardship program.

DEA initially approved REDISA's proposal last December, but under political pressure reopened a public consultation on the matter. In July, DEA approved REDISA's plan a second time and gazetted its decision.

Selection of REDISA is being challenged in court by a competing organization, the South African Tyre Recycling Process Company NPC (SATRP), and Bridgestone South Africa (Pty) Ltd. REDISA was also directed to appear at the court hearing.

The Department of Environmental Affairs announcement is available at http://www.environment.gov.za/?q=content/satrp_court_application.

European Auto Products Chain Must Pay 500,000 Kroner For Chemical Registration Failures

Mekonomen AB, a major automobile products and repairs chain with 224 stores in Sweden, Norway and Denmark, must pay 500,000 kroner in financial penalties for chemical products violations, according to an announcement on Monday by the Norwegian Climate and Pollution Agency (KLIF). Specifically, Mekonomen failed to declare (register) some chemical products in Norway's Product Register, which KLIF administers.

"Had its internal controls worked, I would think that Mekonomen would have discovered the declaration problems and avoided being charged with these violations," said Bjørn Bjørnstad, the director of KLIF's Audit Department. *"Businesses must be responsible for establishing and practicing internal control activities."*

Half of the penalties come in the form of a fine, and the other half are a *"financial confiscation"* of profits earned in part by not implementing the required product declarations. KLIF said the violations were first uncovered during an information audit at Mekonomen's headquarters in 2008.

More information is posted at <http://www.klif.no/no/Aktuelt/Nyheter/2012/September-2012/Mekonomen-ma-betale-for-miljolvbrudd/>.

French Government Publishes Voluntary Guidelines To Combat Greenwashing

On Monday, the French Environment and Energy Management Agency (ADEME) released a 29-page "*Anti-Greenwashing Guide*," which the agency says was written with the input of three national marketing communications entities - l'Association des Agences-Conseils en Communication (AACC), l'Union Des Annonceurs (UDA) and l'Autorité de Régulation Professionnelle de la Publicité (ARPP)

The guide includes a series of tests or evaluation sheets that producers and manufacturers can use to determine whether the environmental claims they make about their products and services are environmentally valid and socially beneficial or are greenwashing.

The guide provides a list of common indicators of greenwashing. They include product claims that are disproportionate in environmental benefit, use vague environmental terms, provide insufficient factual support, contain overly suggestive environmental visual elements, include a nonrecognized ecolabel (an in-house or brand ecolabel vs. a nationally or internationally recognized ecolabel), or environmental information irrelevant to the product or service being marketed.

Download a copy of the guide at http://www.raymond.com/links/www.ademe.typepad.fr/files/ademe_greenwashing_guide-2.pdf.

Statistics & Trends

Austin, Texas Mail Opt Out Effort Eliminates 71,000 Pounds Of Waste In First Five Months

Today, the City of Austin, Texas announced that an unwanted mail opt out effort launched in April with Catalog Choice has eliminated the delivery of 71,000 pounds of unwanted materials likely to become waste. It estimates the effort so far has saved 556 trees and prevented the generation of 200,827 pounds of greenhouse gases.

Residents can opt out from receiving phone books, catalogs, coupons, credit card solicitations and other undesired publications through Catalog Choice, according to the announcement. So far 4,400 residents have registered for the free opt out program.

The City of Austin announcement is posted at <http://www.austintexas.gov/news/thousands-austinites-preserve-natural-resources-reducing-unwanted-mail>.

Israeli Ministries Plan Would Create A National "Silicon Valley Of Environmental Technologies"

Earlier this week, the Ministries of Environmental Protection and Industry, Trade and Labor of Israel released a national plan to create tens of thousands of "green jobs" and advance Israel as a leader in new environmental technologies. The plan will supposedly increase Israel's GDP by 76 billion shekels by 2017, and according to Environmental Protection Minister Gilad Ardan create a "*Silicon Valley of environmental technologies*" in the country.

Among the elements in the plan are raising energy efficiency requirements for electrical appliances, reducing regulatory (licensing) burdens for environmental businesses, implementing new regulations on environmental marketing and greenwashing, expanding environmental science and training programs, and introducing resource efficiency programs for targeted industries.

Get more information and download a copy of the plan at <http://www.sviva.gov.il/InfoServices/NewsAndEvents/MessageDoverAndNews/Pages/2012/September/GreenGrowth.aspx>.

Sao Paulo Government Releases Sustainable Public Procurement Report For 2011

Last month the Ministry of Environment for the State of Sao Paulo issued a 14-page report describing government public procurement accomplishments for 2011, particularly expansion of the Catalog of Materials government procurement officials use as a guide to environmentally-preferable products.

The report stats the catalog now contains 20 product groups, up from 14 product groups in 2010, and that 550 products have now received an environmental seal of approval. Table 1 in the report lists the number of approved products in each of the 20 groups, which includes office supplies, lamps and lighting equipment, containers and packaging materials, HVAC equipment, electrical and power distribution equipment, paving and construction materials and "*equipment, machinery and materials for general services.*"

Download a copy of the report at http://www.ambiente.sp.gov.br/wp/cpla/files/2011/05/ContratacoesSustentaveis_Final.pdf.

Danish EPA Promotes National Swap Meet Day As Waste Reduction Initiative

The Danish EPA announced last week that National Store Byttestag - essentially a massive used products exchange or swap meet - will be held in Copenhagen on September 9. The Danish EPA is promoting the event as part of its Use More - Waste Less Campaign.

The Danish EPA says exchanging no longer wanted products gives them a second life, thereby reducing consumption, conserving resources and reducing waste. As an example, it said that if each Dane swapped a used book, it would eliminate 3,340 tons of waste and save 7,250 tons of CO2 emissions and 39,000 tons of "*resources.*"

The event will also focus on repairing and refurbishing used products. Other regional store Byttestag will be held in Aarhus, Silkeborg, Amager and three other Danish cities.

Get more information at <http://www.brugmerespildmindre.dk/>.

Victorian Government Reports 4,000 Downloads of EPA iPhone Littering Reporting App

Earlier this year, the Environmental Protection Agency of Victoria, Australia published a free iPhone app for reporting roadway litterers. Using the app, iPhone users submit vehicle registration, make, color, model, location, date and time, plus a description of the litter to the EPA, which investigates the submissions.

Last week, Victoria's Minister for Environment and Climate Change, Ryan Smith, said the anti-littering app has been downloaded more than 4,000 times.

"Victorians have had enough of tossers," said Smith. "Everyone has a responsibility to care for our environment and the Victorian Coalition Government makes no apology for getting tough on tossers."

The Victoria EPA estimates that around 12,000 tons of roadside litter is collected and sent to landfill each year.

Victoria's iPhone litter reporting app can be downloaded from the iTunes store at <http://itunes.apple.com/au/app/report-litter/id483072539?mt=8>.

Reusable Bag Campaign Launched In Cancun, Mexico

Last week, the Governor of the state of Quintana Roo, Mexico launched a campaign to reduce consumption of single-use plastic shopping bags by distributing 5,000 reusable bags and beginning an electronic promotional campaign. Governor Roberto Borge also said he would work with supermarkets and other retailers to implement new plastic bag use reduction strategies.

"We are working with the Council of Science and Technology and Agencia Alemana to establish mandatory policies, strategies and an action plan for Quintana Roo," said Borge.

According to a report by GIRE SOL, residents and visitors in Quintana Roo, which includes Cancun, use more than 200 million disposable plastic bags annually.

Get more information at http://www.giresol.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=2429:m%C3%A9xico-inicia-campa%C3%B1a-estatal-para-el-uso-de-bolsas-reusables&Itemid=5.

Business Initiatives

INCPEN Releases Arguments Against Imposing Plastic Bag Taxes

Late last month, the UK's Industry Council for Packaging and the Environment (INCPEN) released a position statement offering five arguments against imposing taxes or levies as a means to reduce single-use plastic bag consumption.

Among the arguments are that *"there is no correlation between the number of bags used and the number that get littered"* and therefore a tax to reduce littering were be *"both disproportionate and ineffective."*

. Other arguments that INCPEN makes is that bag taxes are *"highly unlikely to conserve total resources,"* nor will they significantly reduce marine litter. However, INCPEN advocates reusing single-use bags to minimize any negative environmental impacts of the bags.

The INCPEN position statement can be found at <http://www.incpen.org/docs/CarrierBagsFacts17August2012.pdf>.

The Green Perspective

FSC Consults On Chain Of Custody Requirements For Receiving Product Certification

Last week, the Forest Sustainability Council (FSC) said it had prepared *"an Advice note to ensure that FSC certified products comply with legally required information regarding species and origin of timber and timber products."* The FSC Board of Directors approved moving ahead with the measure last spring.

FSC has opened a public consultation on the draft Advice, which will close on September 24. The Advice focuses on *"adjustments in the FSC Chain of Custody requirements"* for having products FSC certified and harmonizes FSC's requirements with others.

Get more information on the public consultation at <http://www.fsc.org/technical-news.325.146.htm>.

The **Bulletin** provides weekly news briefs on important and unusual developments in recycling, producer responsibility, resource recovery, waste management, ecolabeling, green public procurement, chemicals and materials management and related environmental regulations, trends and initiatives around the world. Please forward this page to any colleagues that may be interested in the subject area.

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