



## Responsible Recycling Task Force Meeting #5

August 24, 2018 - 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Kirkland City Hall – 123 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Kirkland, WA

### Members Present:

|           |              |                                     |
|-----------|--------------|-------------------------------------|
| April     | Atwood       | Seattle University, SWAC Vice Chair |
| Stacey    | Auer         | City of Redmond                     |
| Sabrina   | Combs        | City of Bothell                     |
| Susan     | Fife-Ferris  | SPU                                 |
| Cynthia   | Foley        | Sound Cities                        |
| Jeff      | Gaisford     | KCSWD                               |
| Mason     | Giem         | City of SeaTac                      |
| Sego      | Jackson      | SPU                                 |
| Phillippa | Kassover     | City of Lake Forest Park, SWAC      |
| Kevin     | Kelly        | Recology, SWAC Chair                |
| Linda     | Knight       | City of Renton, MSWMAC Vice Chair   |
| John      | MacGillivray | City of Kirkland                    |
| Ken       | Marshall     | KC, SWAC                            |
| Jenna     | McInnis      | City of Kirkland                    |
| Michelle  | Metzler      | Waste Management                    |
| Joan      | Nelson       | City of Auburn                      |
| Sarah     | Ogier        | City of Bellevue                    |
| Yolanda   | Pon          | Public Health                       |
| Janet     | Prichard     | Republic Services                   |
| Stephanie | Schwenger    | City of Bellevue                    |
| Lisa      | Sepanski     | KCSWD                               |
| Penny     | Sweet        | Councilmember, MSWMAC Chair         |
| Rob       | Van Orsow    | City of Federal Way                 |
| Hans      | VanDusen     | SPU                                 |
| John      | Walsh        | KCSWD                               |

### Guests:

Nina Goodrich, GreenBlue, Sustainable Packaging Coalition

Tamara Burns, Recycle BC

Sam Baker, Recycle BC

Chris Toman, Amazon

### Consultants:

Julie Colehour, Facilitator, C+C

Colette Marien, Meeting Coordinator and Notetaker, C+C



## **Agenda Item #1:** Welcome & Introduction (*called to order by Julie Colehour at 9:04am*)

### **Discussion:**

- *John MacGillivray* shares safety information about Kirkland City Hall
- *Julie Colehour* asks new attendees to introduce themselves. New attendees include:
  - *Mason Giem*, Public Works Program Coordinator for the City of SeaTac
  - *John Walsh*, King County Solid Waste, filling in for *Meg Moorehead*
  - *Jenna McInnis*, City of Kirkland
  - *Chris Toman*, Amazon
- *Julie Colehour* shares that some members of the task force will be touring Amazon in a few weeks and informs the room that *Chris Toman* is here today as an observer. *Julie* asks *Chris* to share some additional info about his role.
- *Chris Toman* informs the room that he works on Amazon's circular economy team, focusing on reducing packaging waste and increasing recycling options for Amazon customers. *Chris* adds that his team works to divert waste from the landfill whenever possible.
- *Julie Colehour* provides an overview of the days agenda:
  - Recycle BC Overview & Framework with speakers *Tamara Burns* and *Sam Baker* from Recycle BC dialing in from British Columbia, Canada
  - National and Private Sector Sustainable Packaging Efforts with speaker *Nina Goodrich* from the Sustainable Packaging Coalition
- *Julie Colehour* reviews the Responsible Recycling Task Force Goals, Outcomes and Role:
  - **Short Term Goal:** To help identify near-, mid- and long-term actions in response to reduction in export markets for mixed recyclable materials due to China National Sword policies.
  - **Longer Term Goal:** To help establish commitment across the region to responsible recycling and domestic sorting/processing of curbside recyclables.
  - **Outcomes:** Prepare a report with actionable items and recommendations for future action by all; if possible, develop interim tools for communications and other topics that are more immediately available.
  - **Role of Task Force:** Not to make decisions, rather to learn about the problem, understand activities that are being implemented elsewhere and opportunities for change. They will provide guidance on next steps that will be brought back to county advisory committees and decision makers.
- *Julie Colehour* summarizes the task force recommendations developed to date, noting that the final outcome report will include the following mainline recommendations:
  - **From meeting #1 (4/30/19):** The region should make a commitment to responsible recycling and domestic sorting/processing of curbside recyclables.
  - **From meeting #2 (6/1/18):** All regional curbside programs should remove plastic bags and shredded paper from the blue bin. *Julie* notes that necessary communication surrounding curbside programs will be developed prior to any removal of materials.
  - **From meeting #3 (6/18/18):** The region should have a coordinated and consistent approach to waivers.



- *Julie Colehour* notes that for meeting #4 (7/18/18) we ran out of time to come to a recommendation during the meeting and have therefore drafted the following recommendation for review and discussion today:
  - **Domestic sorting and processing should be the priority in order to create market ready bales.**
- *Julie Colehour* asks the room if there are additional thoughts or agreement around this recommendation.
- *Penny Sweet* shares that she is concerned about whether the recommendation is realistic
- *Sego Jackson* notes that there is confusion between sorting and processing in the recommendation currently and adds that the recommendation should really highlight that materials need to be sorted to a condition that they can then be sent somewhere else for processing.
  - *Sego* confirms that he would remove the word “processing” from the recommendation and say “direct to mill commodities” instead of “market ready bales”
- *Jeff Gaisford* states that he is aware this recommendation won’t happen right away, rather is meant to be about how we can start supporting the idea of prioritizing domestic sorting and processing.
- *Lisa Sepanski* adds that timelines have not been placed on this recommendation as far as near-, mid-, or long-term and suggests that making this recommendation a mid-term goal may make it more realistic.
- *Susan Fife-Ferris* suggests incorporating verbiage that notes resources should be put towards prioritization of domestic sorting and processing into the recommendation
- *Michelle Metzler* highlights that Merlin Plastics is not a domestic facility and suggests the need to define what we mean when we say “domestic.” Is there a list of criteria?
- *Susan Fife-Ferris* agrees, stating that the word domestic is used very loosely in order to incorporate British Columbia but that not everyone who reads the recommendation will understand that. *Susan* adds that we need to define the word so it’s clear that what we mean is that we do not want to ship materials offshore and would like to manage them within our region, preferably in the West Coast region between BC and Mexico.
- *Jeff Gaisford* notes that part of what the recommendation is getting at is the discussion needed around the chain of custody and knowing where materials are going.
- *Lisa Sepanski* states that we can further define “domestic” in the final report and that we will also look at the idea of reducing transportation and keeping sorting more local.
- *Julie Colehour* asks if the room would like to add something into the recommendation about the chain of custody or if that recommendation should be incorporated into a later recommendation.
- *Phillippa Kassover* agrees with all the mentions of further defining the language in the recommendation and asks is the word “processing” is also coming out
- *Julie Colehour* affirms that removing “processing”, adding mention of resources and adjusting the definition of “domestic” are all adjustments that will be made to the recommendation.
- *Phillippa Kassover* asks whose “priority” is the recommendation referring to?
- *Julie Colehour* replies that the recommendation is that our region should make domestic sorting a priority, meaning that everyone in the room would have a priority towards domestic sorting rather than shipping materials off shore for sorting.
- *Susan Fife-Ferris* adds that, based on the recommendation, Seattle would make domestic sorting a priority and would look at developing contracts that are drafted to support that
- *Phillippa Kassover* asks if we should add a word about who owns the priority



- *Stephanie Schwenger* notes that her impression is that materials are currently being sorted here in Seattle and asks if this recommendation is talking about specific materials. *Stephanie* adds that specific materials should be specified because the current understanding is that material is sorted in or around Seattle.
- *Julie Colehour* states that the recommendation is about sorting all materials into a condition that is good enough to go direct to mill
- *Stephanie Schwenger* notes that maybe we should then say something along the lines of “domestic sorting into specific grades”
- *Sego Jackson* adds that the whole point is to get materials separated to a point that they are useable commodities that don’t need to be further sorted or processed elsewhere. *Sego* adds that this type of sorting would go beyond sorting to a spec.
- *Sego Jackson* comments that perhaps by pulling processing out of the recommendation we’ve lost some nuance around what the rest of the recommendation means.
- *Lisa Sepanski* notes that if we sort domestically and it goes to Asia or to a plant that does not have the same environmental standards as we do, then we haven’t done anything to improve the situation. *Lisa* adds that needing to know the environmental standards of the place where materials are sent could be another point to call out.
- *Julie Colehour* informs the room that a new statement will be crafted and shared with the task force for feedback via email and approval at the top of the next meeting. *Julie* also mentions that the recommendation may be broken into two recommendations.
- *Julie Colehour* moves onto address the recent Communications Toolkit that was sent out on August 15<sup>th</sup> and asks *Stephanie Schwenger*, member of the Communications Consortium, to provide a brief update on the toolkit.
- *Stephanie Schwenger* shares the following updates:
  - The Social Media Toolkit was sent out by *Matt Manguso* on August 15<sup>th</sup>
  - Includes two short sets of talking points that were developed by a group of stakeholders from Sound Cities Association, King County, haulers and others
  - The intent of the toolkit is to provide prepackaged social media posts for Facebook, Twitter and Instagram
  - Posts use basic messaging around recycling right and how to prevent waste in the first place
  - Content for posts are available on Dropbox and via attachments shared by *Matt Manguso*
  - It is not obligatory for cities to use the posts, but they are packaged up to make using them simple if cities so choose
  - Social media posts will be updated on a monthly basis
  - In addition to social media posts, the toolkit also includes talking points for elected officials, solid waste staff, and others to use to communicate the impacts of China Sword and info on what rate payers can do to help to the public
  - Talking points are fact-based and non-controversial
  - The communications consortium will continue to meet in order to provide fresh content to cities that want to use prepacked posts
  - The communications consortium will be following up with everyone to see what they’ve used and what they’ve found to be effective



- *Stephanie Schwenger* adds that, in order to maintain consistency around messaging, in Bellevue they are sharing a couple of posts each month that are based around a specific theme such as “clean, dry, empty” one month and paper waste messaging another
- *Jeff Gaisford* asks if the communications consortium will also be looking at doing paid media
- *Stephanie Schwenger* replies, stating that the consortium has been looking at options to pull together resources to possibly do print, earned media, TV and boosted social posts.
- *Stacey Auer* asks whether any thought has been given to how we might go one step beyond messaging to actual behavior change, noting that messaging doesn’t always equate to behavior change
- *Stephanie Schwenger* replies that the consortium is mostly focused on the messaging
- *Phillippa Kassover* shares that she has passed the messaging on in her city and notes that in Lake Forest Park they are giving out reusable grocery bags at every city event to try to support behavior change. *Phillippa* adds that Kroger recently announced that they are eliminating plastic bags and that perhaps the task force should put out a statement to praise and acknowledge this in order to encourage other companies to start changing behavior.
- *Linda Knight* shares that she thinks the messaging is great and appropriate for a regional group. *Linda* adds that she’s not sure a regional group of cities could align priorities enough to work together on one behavior change and notes that it can be beneficial when cities test different behavior change strategies in their programs independently as some strategies will prove to be more effective than others. *Linda* also cautions recognizing a company like Kroger [for their efforts to reduce single use plastic bags] while not other businesses who have made positive change, as that could get political.
- *Julie Colehour* wraps up, noting that *Tamara Burns* and *Sam Baker* from Recycle BC have just joined the call.

#### **Action Items:**

- Craft a revised recommendation for meeting #4 and share with the task force via email for feedback. The revised recommendation will take the following into account:
  - Address confusion created by mention of both “sorting” and “processing” and determine whether and how processing is included in the recommendation
  - Clarify that sorting is referring to the need to sort materials to a condition that is ready to processing without further sorting elsewhere
  - Use “direct to mill commodities” rather than “market ready bales”
  - Clarify that the recommendation is a mid-term goal
  - Incorporate verbiage that clarifies “who” needs to prioritize domestic sorting
  - More clearly define what “domestic” means

#### **Agenda Item #2: Recycle BC Overview and Framework (called to order by Julie Colehour at 9:31am)**

- *Julie Colehour* introduces *Tamara Burns* and *Sam Baker* from Recycle BC and informs the room that they will talk about how they set up the Recycle BC program and touch on how the program fits with aspects of the Responsible Recycling Framework.

#### **Tamara Burns and Sam Baker’s presentation: *Redesigning Residential Recycling***



- Recycle BC is a not-for-profit organization responsible for residential packaging and paper recycling throughout British Columbia
- The program is funded by over 1,200 businesses including retailers, manufacturers and restaurants
- All aspects of the program are reported through to the government
- Recycle BC defines Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) as follows:
  - EPR is the obligation that businesses have to reduce the environmental impact of their products and packaging
  - Producer responsibility spans the entire product management lifecycle, physical and financial, for products and packaging supplied into the marketplace
  - Shifts responsibility upstream, away from municipalities and regional waste authorities to the companies that put the products in the market
- Recycle BC operates within the framework of the Province of BC's Environmental Management Act and the Recycling Regulation
  - The Recycling Regulation is divided by product type
  - Materials collected are selected by the regulation and once approved, Recycle BC is held to a 5-year commitment and obligation to collect that material
- Recycle BC's stewardship plan
  - Recycle BC provides management of and reasonable access to packaging and paper collection services
  - Recycle BC must perform within the context of the Pollution Prevention Hierarchy, meaning they must always strive to improve. For example, if a material is going to landfill, they must try to recover it, if a material is being recovered, they must try to recycle it, and so on.
  - Recycle BC's obligation is to receive a 75% recovery rate within a reasonable timeframe
  - To meet these obligations, Recycle BC works with businesses, organizes and manages post collection through transportation, etc.
  - Recycle BC markets the materials so that all the end states can be known and audited by an independent third party in order to prove that the stated recovery rate has actually been achieved
- In 2017, Recycle BC:
  - Collected 174,942 tonnes from producers
  - Achieved 75% recovery rate
  - Recovered 38.3 kg of material per capita
- Recycle BC collects materials via curbside, multi-family, and depot collection, and measures accessibility based on the number of households in BC who have access to some kind of drop off or pick up location
  - 98% of households have access to a depot drop-off
  - 1,846,097 households' services via curbside, multi-family, and depot collection
  - 156 communities participating in curbside and multi-family collection
  - 3,475,000 people served by curbside and multi-family collection
- Recycle BC collection streams include:
  - **Curbside:** collection from households that set out material individually for pick-up
  - **Multi-family:** collection from a central location in residences with five or more units



- **Depot:** residents drop off materials at one of the many depots through BC
- Recycle BC's post-collection network:
  - Once residential material is collected it is dropped off at one of 33 receiving and transfer facilities
  - At the receiving facilities, material is baled up and moved onto one of 11 pre-condition facilities where minimum amounts of sorting are done
  - All bales are then shipped down to one recovery facility where all materials are sorted out
- Curbside contamination:
  - Recycle BC actively measures all contamination
  - Finds a difference between contamination in multi stream compared to single stream—less than half the amount of contamination in multi than there is in single stream
- Curbside capture rates:
  - Single stream collection does not have a significantly higher capture rate
  - Of the top 10 highest capture rates, 6 are multi stream programs
- Responsible Recycling Elements contributing to Recycle BC's success:
  - **Standardized Material List:** Material lists are standardized and consistent across the entire province regardless of the stream and all collectors in program collect the same materials
  - **Segregated Collection of Certain Materials:** glass, plastic bags and foam packaging are collected individually and Recycle BC directs where those materials go to ensure recyclability
    - Glass is either segregated at the curb or dropped off at a depot by residents
    - Plastic bags and foam packaging go to depots only to ensure that they are not impacting sort lines
  - **Effective Sorting:**
    - Receiving, consolidation and transfer facilities receive, store and bale source separated materials separately
    - Pre-conditioning facilities sort single stream materials into fibers and mixed containers
    - Container recovery facility uses state of the art technology and 10 optical sorters that have capability to sort 12-14 categories
      - This type of sorting would not be possible if Recycle BC didn't have that scale of all materials from the province coming to this single location
  - **Provincial System Coordination**
    - Large network of facilities across BC
    - Coordination across the province to use a consistent material list (what is recyclable in Vancouver is also recyclable in a small northern town)
    - Harmonized messaging across the province
  - **Domestic Processing and End Markets**
    - Recycle BC has many domestic end markets for materials, including:
      - Plastic processor (Merlin Plastics) in BC, which takes all plastics except for polystyrene, which is sent to Asia or Europe
      - Glass is all processed in BC



- Metal processed in either Canada or the US
    - Paper processed in BC, Pacific Northwest, or overseas
  - **Recycling is Not Free:** Recycle BC is a 100% EPR-funded program, meaning that businesses that supply packaging and paper to BC residents fund the program
    - It costs \$85 million a year to run Recycle BC
- The following examples highlight ways that Recycle BC works with and engages producers:
  - Keurig
    - Recycle BC worked with Keurig and post collection partners (Emterra and Merlin) to facilitate testing of the new K-Cup new design
    - Used RFID to track where the material ends up in the sorting line
    - The test produced Keurig's highest recovery rate with 92% of K-Cups making it to the right sorting line at both Merlin and Emterra
      - Pods under Recycle BC's program are required to be clean and without coffee in them
  - Nespresso:
    - Nespresso uses aluminum pods that residents cannot open or remove coffee from
    - Pilot in two BC communities are testing how best to capture the pods
    - Residents put pod in a green bag provided by Nespresso. Customers seal the bag and put it in the container recycling bin
    - Green bags are collected from the bin and taken to the facility where they are removed from the line by hand and shipped to a machine to for separation
  - Plasticsqueeze tube:
    - 3-month pilot study to understand how residents prepare tubes for recycling and what types of tubes they include for recycling
    - All residents receive a pink bag that they put the squeeze tube into once finished. The pink bag is then placed in the recycling bin where they get collected
    - The study aims to determine if tubes can be recycled and whether the residents will actually remove contents from the tube before putting in the pink bag
  - Other flexible plastic packaging:
    - Collection of Other Flexible Plastic Packaging at depots; launched June 2018 at 115 depots, full roll-out January 2019
    - Research and development project in partnership with post-collection partner, Green by Nature, and Merlin Plastics
    - Seeks to develop technology that will enable the recycling of Flexible Plastic Packaging
    - Any material not capable of being recycled will be recovered, processed and marketed as engineered fuel

#### Q&A:

- *Linda Knight asks what Sam Baker means by engineered fuel*



- *Sam Baker* replies that engineered fuel is a direct replacement for fossil fuels in the manufacturing of cement—it's a refined fuel that is required to meet specific energy outputs
- *Linda Knight* asks if it is burned, which *Sam Baker* replies it is used for energy in the process of making cement, as a direct substitute for coal.
- *Susan Fife-Ferris* asks if *Tamara* and *Sam* could describe the transition, specifically the steps and timeline taken from BC's previous recycling program to a full EPR program
- *Tamara Burns* shares the following steps and timeline:
  - The first step was legislation requiring the transition. From there, planning for the program began in 2012 and the program went live in May of 2014.
  - By the summer of 2013, consultation for the program plan was completed and planning for what the commercial services agreement template and standards for collection would look like had begun
  - Recycle BC had meetings with all interested collection services and contracts were signed in November 2013
  - While collection contracts were underway, an RFP for post-collection services was simultaneously issued in September 2013
  - In January of 2014, both post- and pre-collection services were awarded
  - The program went live in May 2014
  - The timeline from start to finish was about two years of full time work, all which was supported by the backdrop of the legislation that was requiring the transition to occur
- *Tamara Burns* notes that this timeline is only in relation to the supply chain/operation side and what needed to happen to convert from a municipally run program to a producer run program. This timeline does not cover set up of program funding and stewards.
- *Tamara Burns* adds that all components of the program were developed on a contractual framework
- *Phillippa Kassover* asks about the single stream recycling of glass, plastic bags and foam, specifically what happens from a consumer perspective in order to keep these materials separate
- *Recycle BC* replies that residents take these materials to depots that are typically located in commercial areas. *Recycle BC* adds that, for glass, municipalities can opt to have curbside glass collection.
- *Rob Van Orsow* asks if *Recycle BC* could describe in more detail about how the hauling system was impacted in the transition, specifically how haulers were transitioned into the system, whether or not they were compensated, and in what ways their contracts changed.
- *Recycle BC* replies that when legislation was released, everyone knew that post collection services would be separate from collection services and that a date was baked into the legislation for when the transition would happen. When the RFP went out for post-collection service providers, it received responses from various waste management companies and the one that was selected was to be a province-wide network. Today, Recycle BC has a single contract with the company who was awarded the contract and it was up to that company to contract with existing processing facilities to establish their post collection network. Essentially, if haulers wanted to work in the new program they submitted proposals in order to be awarded a contract to provide services.



- *Recycle BC* continues, adding that municipalities had the option to continue subcontracting their haulers themselves, or if the municipality no longer wanted to be responsible for their recycling program, they had the option to turn management of the program and contracts over to Recycle BC. Vancouver is one city that chose to turn their program over to Recycle BC.
- *Sego Jackson* asks *Recycle BC* to explain the options that were offered to the cities in terms of their participation in the program, providing collection services, and incentive payments.
- *Recycle BC* explains that the municipalities had the following three curbside choices:
  - **Opt-into the program:** By opting in, municipalities entered into a contractual agreement for Recycle BC to provide annual financing for collection of materials. The municipality could still select/designate the company handling collection. The financing amount provided to the municipality by Recycle BC is based on the number of households in the municipality rather than collection tonnage.
  - **Opt-out of the program:** Some municipalities felt Recycle BC was not yet a proven entity or they didn't want to upset residents, in which case they could choose not to enter the program and continue with normal recycling operations. At the end of the five-year contract, the municipality can decide if they would like to join the program or continue opting out. *Recycle BC* notes that the vast majority of municipalities that opted out in 2014 are planning to join.
  - **Hand the business over to Recycle BC:** If a municipality did not want to be in the business of managing residential recycling, they could hand over all collection and management to Recycle BC who will then select a collection firm and handle all resident inquiries. In this case, the municipality would still be responsible for organics and waste collection, just not recycling.
    - *Recycle BC* notes that they manage around one third of the households in BC because of this
- *Susan Fife-Ferris* asks about service levels and how, from a municipalities point of view, Recycle BC ensures a high level of service for the public.
- *Recycle BC* replies that their service agreements are very comprehensive and include all service standards. To monitor contamination rates, Recycle BC does a system of audits on all materials that come in and provides regular feedback to municipalities on how each participating collector is performing. Doing this allows Recycle BC and the municipality to promote certain problem items when needed.
- *Susan Fife-Ferris* asks how customers can reach out with questions about their recycling in the case that Recycle BC is managing the recycling program and the municipality is managing organics and waste.
- *Recycle BC* replies that the customer can no longer call one number of all three services. They will need to call Recycle BC for questions about recycling and the municipality for questions on waste and organics.
- *Jeff Gaisford* asks, now that the transition is done, are there any lessons learned that Recycle BC would share with the room?
- *Tamara Burns* replies that one of the pieces learned is the power of using data to manage and communicate to partners about their performance. When the program began, there was no data available so everyone had to take a leap of faith.



- *Sam Baker* adds that it's been interesting to watch the China Sword ban and realize the benefits that Recycle BC has due to the scale of collection they are doing. Individual municipalities in this situation would struggle to find markets for materials, but the scale of Recycle BC has made weathering the China Sword ban a bit easier.
- *Sam Baker* adds the additional learning to look at how contracts are structured moving forward knowing that commodity pricing isn't a given.
- *Ken Marshall* asks how glass and other materials that don't go into the collection bin are enforced – is it through the legislation? What if people don't take the glass, foam and film to the depots?
- *Recycle BC* replies that the legislation doesn't address how Recycle BC directs the materials, rather that they must achieve the 75% recovery rate. To achieve this rate, Recycle BC must get glass, film and foam recycled. Depot systems in BC are robust and BC residents are used to going to depots to get their beverage deposits back and to take other materials at the same time. *Recycle BC* adds that there are some municipalities that ban recyclable materials from going into the landfill.
- *Ken Marshall* asks if residents are getting paid to return materials to the depot, to which *Recycle BC* replies that they only manage PPP recycling and that other organizations manage deposit return materials. For packaging and paper recycling, the resident isn't paid for handing material into a depot.

**Agenda Item #3:** National and Private Sector Sustainable Packaging Efforts (*called to order by Julie Colehour at 10:18am*)

- *Julie Colehour* introduces *Nina Goodrich*, Executive Director of GreenBlue and Director of the Sustainable Packaging Coalition

**Nina Goodrich's Presentation:**

- The Sustainable Packaging Coalition is a GreenBlue project that has been around since 2002. It is a member-based group that brings people together across the value chain with hopes to inspire corporate members to act.
- The two major GreenBlue programs that Nina will talk about today are: The Sustainable Packaging Coalition (SPC) and How2Recycle.
- SPC has 250 members who are split pretty evenly between brand owners and retailers (26%), packaging converters (26%), material manufacturers (22%), and academic, governmental, consultancy and other making up the remaining 26%
- How2Recycle has 109 members who are mostly brand owners (67%) with a few packaging converters (12%) and material manufacturers (8%). Because a large portion are brand owners, SPC has had success in engaging brands in a voluntary way.
- As far as how the programs differ from Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), *Nina Goodrich* notes the EPR is a great financing mechanism but doesn't get brands to commit to changing their materials, whereas How2Recycle offers a good way to engage and educate brands about the recyclability of their products.
- SPC takes more of a life style approach in thinking about:



- Sourcing – where a material comes from
- Material Health – What are the material health considerations of the packaging material
- Optimization – there are two major corporate drivers: low carbon footprint and recyclability. It's important to remember that environmental footprint of the product is almost always higher than that of the product so it is important not to compromise the packages ability to protect the product when optimizing. *Nina Goodrich* adds that the move to flexible packaging provides a lower carbon footprint for the package and for transporting the package/product but the material is not usually recyclable today.
- Recovery – many brands have a goal of 100% compostable and recyclable by 2020, but in order to reach this goal, materials have to have recovery value.
- Design for Recycling and Recycled Content:
  - **Creating Supply:** When thinking about creating supply for recycling, it's important to think about the end market value and whether the materials can be processed and sorted
  - **Creating Demand:** Up until now it's been difficult to create sufficient demand for recycled materials. *Nina Goodrich* believes that we cannot rely on mechanical recycling to solve all of our problems as the quality isn't high enough and as materials continue to mix the value will decrease.
    - To create demand, someone has to want to use the material
- How2Recycle is a program designed to clean up what's going in the cart
  - Target was the first major retailer to support the label. Walmart committed to putting How2Recycle on its own brand in 2017. Today, over 500 Walmart suppliers participate using How2Recycle
  - How2Recycle is an on-package labeling system that tells people exactly what to do with their packaging at the end of life. The labels will tell consumers how to recycle each piece of the package and even when not to recycle certain parts of the package. How2Recycle requires brand members to call out the different parts of their package, which effectively educates both brands and consumers about recycling well.
  - Currently about 50% of How2Recycle packaging labels issued are recyclable and 50% of the labels are not yet recyclable
  - Keurig is a great example of what happen when a brand learns about their packaging – when Keurig learned that the resin they were using wasn't valuable to recyclers, they changed their material.
- How does How2Recycle define recyclability?
  - How2Recycle was created to be consistent with the guidance put out by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). A recycling claim is a marketing claim and is regulated by the FTC.
  - The law was designed to prevent consumer deception and stop brands from leading consumers to believe a package is recyclable if it's not
  - Because How2Recycle has been created under this law and in close partnership with the Federal Trade Commission, it is important for How2Recycle to always make sure that there is no consumer deception in their labeling



- Anyone who makes a recyclability claim is covered by the regulation. The regulation says that in order for something to be considered recyclable it must be collected, separated, recovered, and reused
- *Nina Goodrich* adds that in the past when materials went to China that counted as a market even though some of the materials might not have been recycled. With the China Sword ban, we now have a real opportunity to ensure that packaging is being recycled
- How2Recycle further defines recyclability of a package as follows:
  - **Collection:** how many of the collection programs available to consumers will accept the item? How many communities can accept the material through curbside or drop off recycling? Over 60% of consumers must have access to recycling an item for it to be called widely recyclable. In addition, it must be able to be sorted, reprocessed and have an end market.
  - **Sortation:** For items collected in a residential program, what is the likelihood that something will be correctly sorted in a MRF and make it to the correct bale? (some items are too small, some items can't be seen by the sorters (black plastic etc.)
  - **Reprocessing:** Is there some aspect of the packaging design that's going to cause problems for reprocessors, such as coating on paper or full sleeve labels on plastic containers.
  - **End Markets:** If there is no end market for a material then we don't want to call it recyclable. There is a big difference between something that can be recycled by the manufacturer and something that can be recycled from curbside collection.
- *Nina Goodrich* adds that the recycling facility in BC that *Tamara Burns* and *Sam Baker* mentioned is an amazing facility and that, in BC, they are asking why materials are not recyclable rather than trying to narrow down the recyclable list like what we're doing here in the US.
- 4 Main How2Recycle Labels/Categories:
  - **Widely Recycled:** Applies to packaging that has at least 60% availability to recycling programs for either curbside or drop off recycling.
  - **Check Locally:** Applies to package where it doesn't have 60% access to recycling, but it has more than 20%, or where there are design challenges that would make it inappropriate for a Widely Recycled label. A product could be pushed back to this category if there were sortation, reprocessing or market challenges.
  - **Not Yet Recycled:** This label tells people to put the item in the trash and applies to packaging where fewer than 20% of Americans can recycle it where they live, or, it's a contaminant.
  - **Store Drop Off:** This applies to pure polyethylene bags, wraps and films. It tells the consumer to not put these items in their curbside bin, but rather, take these items to the store to recycle there. Applies to pure polyethylene packaging like dry cleaning bags, bread bags, case wrap around drinks, Ziploc bags, grocery bags, and more.
- Special instructions are also included on packages where customized instruction are necessary, such as "discard lid & rinse tray."
- How does How2Recycle help recyclers?



- Increasingly the industry is looking for a uniform list of materials while not realizing that those materials will not last. This is a crisis for MRFs, but is good for us to think through. How2Recycle labels can help in a number of ways, for example:
  - Most important for recyclers is the Not Yet Recyclable label, which helps to combat contamination and eliminate wish recycling.
  - How2Recycle can distinguish between look-a-like packaging and prevent the assumption that an item is recyclable because it looks like other items that are recyclable
  - 67% of people assume that packaging isn't recyclable if they don't see a claim on the package.
- Another way that How2Recycle helps recyclers in through changing people's behaviors:
  - Consumers provide feedback on what they learned from the label, what worked, what didn't and How2Recycle can share this information back with brands
    - How2Recycle offers social media collateral that anyone can use to educate consumers about recycling. All the artwork and details of the social media campaign are available on How2Recycle's website for free.
- The recycling industry tends to spend a lot of time worrying about fringe materials, when in fact:
  - Of the 9000 labels that How2Recycle has issued since October, 53% were widely recycled, 30% were not recyclable, 9% were store drop off, and only 7% were check locally
  - Therefore, if there is a fringe package, it's either going to be one of the many that receive the not yet recyclable label or one of the few that gets the check locally label
    - *Nina Goodrich* adds that the check locally label is a controversial category that exists in large part because of the Federal Trade Commission's regulation that allows a qualified claim \* not recycled in all communities
- How does How2Recycle help improve packaging design and inform brands on how to measure and improve?
  - The How2Recycle platform logs all components and data, sorts by category, and allows brands to track and measure their success. Ideally it motivates them to improve their packaging design.
- Since last October, How2Recycle has made over 9000 specific design recommendations to its members to improve packaging recyclability
- **Key Considerations for the Future of Recycling**
  - What's wrong with the back to basics program?
    - The traditional mix no longer exists and will continue to change - we need to look to the future mix
    - The food industry is rapidly converting to flexible packaging
    - Dual corporate goals of recyclability and low carbon footprint will continue to drive packaging design
  - Recycling is not free
    - Cost of Collection and Processing
      - MRF processing costs have increased to over \$90/ton



- High contamination and low commodity prices do not cover processing costs
  - Material reprocessing is also not free and the resulting product often has a difficult time competing with virgin materials
  - One of the things BC does well, is having Tony Mouchachen of Merlin Plastics a part of both the material recovery side and the program side – allowing him to provide unique feedback and shape what materials can be recycled
- What is circularity for plastics?
  - Not all resins all the same, there are a lot of options and many have different densities
  - For these materials, mechanical recycling will not always work
  - Chemical recycling can help difficult materials, such as film, go back into the recycling stream
- Embracing chemical recycling – what would that look like?
  - A large chemical plant that could take recycled materials and produce resin that can go back into plastic
  - Regionally, many smaller facilities have been set up to take back a material to a different type
  - Some facilities are making fuel, which is controversial but highlights where people are struggling. There are a lot of other materials that could be made out of those items, but if there is no market for the end product, then fuel is a last resort.
- **Q&A:**
  - *Stephanie Schwenger* comments on the variance of interest among brand owners being primarily recyclability and carbon footprint and asks whether toxicity registers anywhere as a concern that brands want to design for.
  - *Nina Goodrich* replies that brands like Target and Walmart have called out toxicity in some personal care beauty products and are raising awareness. *Nina* adds that preventing toxicity in packaging takes baby steps, as people don't tend to want to talk about chemistry. *Nina* notes that when SPC hosts information sessions involving chemistry, only 10 or so people show up compared to tens of people who attend other sessions.
  - *Rob Van Orsow* asks how layered packaging like cartons and aseptic materials fit in the waste stream, whether there is a future for aseptic, and whether the Carton Council is also a part of SPC.
  - *Nina Goodrich* replies that SPC relies on the Carton Council to provide data and that one of the things the Carton Council did was find an end market for cartons. Currently, cartons would be labeled recyclable since it's at 60%, but if it dips below it would move into the check locally category. *Nina* adds that there is a huge push in the industry to replace coatings that don't have to be skimmed off at the mill.
  - *Susan Fife-Ferris* shares her concern with the store drop off label, noting that regionally we don't have a lot of options and have to rely on industries to set up those take-back programs.
  - *Nina Goodrich* replies, noting that many retailers are using How2Recycle labels on their private brands and that a new program is in the works that requires members who are using



How2Recycle on their private brands to also accept store drop offs. Both Target and Fred Meyer are committed.

- *Susan Fife-Ferris* shares that, as a region, we are very committed to working with the industry to try to get store drop off to be a more robust option and to help ensure that what is on the label is actually accurate.

**Agenda Item #4:** Wrap Up & Next Steps (*called to order by Julie Colehour at 10:57am*)

**Discussion:**

- *Julie Colehour* informs the room that we will discuss the recommendation for Engaging Manufacturers and Producers at the beginning of the next meeting on September 19, and asks the task force to be thinking about what the recommendation might be in the meantime.
- *Julie Colehour* informs that room that two new meetings have been added to the schedule, one in November and one in December. Prior to the December meeting, the task force planning team will send out a draft of the final recommendations/outcome document for task force members to review and finalize during the December meeting.
- *Jeff Gaisford* adds that the December 14 meeting is scheduled in anticipation of the regular committee meetings being cancelled, and asks the room to stay tuned for more info and confirmation of that meeting date.
- *Lisa Sepanski* shares information about the WRED event that the WSRA is holding on fiber, fiber markets and paper mills on September 11, and informs the room that registration details will be sent out via email.
- *Susan Fife-Ferris* thanks *Stephanie Schwenger* and the entire Communications Consortium for pulling together the communications toolkit.

**Action items:**

- Send details about the WSRA WRED event via email to the task force