Past Pre-Conference Updates and their Impacts on Climate Change: Textile Recovery

2017 NYSAR³ Annual Recycling Conference

Dan Lilkas-Rain, Recycling Coordinator, Town of Bethlehem, Albany County, NY

NYSAR³ Board Member
Textile Recovery was pre-conference focus in 2014
Ribbon cutting for Re-Clothe NY campaign: Nov. 5, 2014
Official Launch: America Recycles Day: Nov. 15, 2014
NYSAR³’s Statewide Textile Recovery Campaign

- NY’s first statewide effort to target a specific category of recyclable material
- Campaign to address 1.4 billion pounds of textiles trashed each year in New York State
- Partnered with Secondary Materials & Recycled Textiles trade group (SMART) and the Council for Textile Recycling (CTR).
Why Focus on Textile Recovery?

- "Forgotten Recyclable" comprising 5+% of waste stream
- Only about 15% of textiles currently recovered, making it the next "low hanging fruit" after organics
- Collection and recycling infrastructure already exists
- Significant economic and environmental impacts (far greater than most traditional recyclables)
NYSAR³’s Statewide Textile Recovery Summits

- Statewide Stakeholder Summits in 2014 and 2015
- Hosted and facilitated by Center for Sustainable Community Solutions at SyracuseCoE

- Dialogue focused on obstacles and challenges of textile recovery, as well as outreach strategies to achieve project goals
- 50 participants per summit representing a diverse group of stakeholders from municipal level, public and private collection and recycling industries, regulators, educators and students
Campaign Successes:

- Campaign collected over 1 million additional pounds estimated of textiles in first year, and counting.
- Widespread Media Coverage. November 2014 alone the campaign achieved 156 media placements with $250,000 media placement valuation
- Campaign received a 2015 EPA Environmental Champion Award!

NYSAR3 Board member Melissa Young, and ‘Re-Clothe NY’ Chair Dan Lilkas-Rain accepting EPA Award, April 2015.
Re-Clothe NY Coalition and Outreach Campaign

- Developed coalition standards to ensure transparency, consistent messaging, reporting collection amounts.
- PSI conducted successful outreach effort in 2016 with social media messages like pictured here.
- Textile collections rose an average of 22% from 2015-2016 among survey respondents!
2017 New York Textiles Summit:
Innovations in Textiles Manufacturing, Waste Reduction, and Reuse
New York Textiles Summit
October 31, 2017

- Over 200 registered participants (in person at FIT and remote via webcast)
- Included diverse group of stakeholders; designers, brands and retailers for the first time (key missing groups previously)
- AGENDA:
  1. Sustainable manufacturing + design
  2. Collections
  3. Markets
  4. Circular economy + innovative recycling technologies
  5. Discussion and next steps
2017 New York Textiles Summit

2nd
The textile industry is the 2nd largest polluter in the world... second only to big oil.
600 gallons
It takes 600 gallons of water to produce the cotton for a t-shirt. During its life, the manufacturing and use of that t-shirt will use over 4000 gallons
3%
Textile manufacturing accounts for 3% of the world’s CO2 emissions

2.5 billion tons
Textile & garment manufacturing create 2.5 billion tons of waste. Water every year in China alone
17% to 20%
The textile manufacturing sector accounts for 17-20% of the world’s industrial pollution

12.8 million tons
Every year 12.8 million tons of pre-consumer textile waste are discarded globally

Tara St. James
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Average textile waste at the manufacturing stage is 15%
It takes 600 gallons of water to make one cotton t-shirt - That’s enough for one person to drink for 2.5 years

-Sustainable Apparel Coalition

Manufacturing an ecological t-shirt
84% less water
85% fewer chemicals
17% less energy
than comparable products
Textiles currently recycled in U.S. annually has estimated carbon reduction equivalent of removing about 1 million passenger cars from the nation’s roads.

Compared with 170,000 cars for U.S. yard waste recycling, 210,000 cars for U.S. glass recycling, and 640,000 cars for U.S. plastic recycling.

That is with only 15% of available textiles currently being recycled!

(SMART and US EPA data)
Q&A

Dan Lilkas-Rain, NYSAR\(^3\) Board Member and Chairman, Re-Clothe NY Campaign

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