PLASTIC BAGS AND FILM CHALLENGES: THE EMERGENCE OF WRAP

Tonya Randell
Moore Recycling Associates
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CHALLENGE: MRF CONTAMINATION & COSTS

![Image of recycling facility with a chart showing cost/benefit of film recovery. The chart indicates a significant cost for curbside collection compared to retail.]
CHALLENGE: LITTER & DISPOSAL ISSUES
CHALLENGE: LOW PUBLIC AWARENESS

Most people don’t know ....

• Plastic bags and film can even be recycled

• Plastic bags and film are generally not accepted in curbside recycling
POLICY RESPONSE: BAG LEGISLATION

States with Enacted Plastic Bag Legislation

Source: National Conference of State Legislatures
## Notable Cities with Plastic Bag Bans/Fees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cities with Plastic Bag Bans</th>
<th>Cities with Plastic Bag Fees</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austin</td>
<td>Boulder, CO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cambridge, MA</td>
<td>Brownsville, TX</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chicago*</td>
<td>Montgomery County, MD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>New York City</td>
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<td>San Francisco</td>
<td>Portland, ME</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seattle</td>
<td>Washington, D.C.</td>
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</table>

Source: National Conference of State Legislatures
• Plastic bags account for only about 1/3 of the mixed retail material recycled in the US.*

• Remaining 2/3 is film packaging that still presents recycling challenges for MRFs and recycling programs.

• Bans often lead to removal of recycling bins and access to recycle “beyond the bag” materials.

• Spot checks in L.A. and Sonoma County, CA found removal of 27% and 41% of bins.*

*Source: Trex and Moore Recycling Associates
INDUSTRY RESPONSE:
WRAP RECYCLING ACTION PROGRAM (WRAP)

• “Return to Retail” message provides alternative to curbside bins/MRFs
• Maximize material quality - for film and other commodities
• Protect local environment
• Educate consumers about recycling material “beyond the bag”
• Agnostic on bans and fees
WRAP LAUNCHES: WISCONSIN, 2013

2012 study looked at plastics markets, supplies, and opportunities in the state.

Stated options for plastic film and bags:
• Start with specific goals targeting plastic film/bags diversion.
• The 25 largest cities should have viable drop-off recycling options at local retail stores by 2014.
• This initiative would be coupled with a parallel program to enhance PE film collections from businesses.
WRAP: HOW IT WORKS

Common Goal  One Initiative  Motivated Partners

REINVIGORATING FILM RECYCLING:
DOUBLE FILM RECYCLING BY 2020 TO 2 BILLION POUNDS
Wanted a messaging campaign to issue a voluntary challenge to the community to increase film/wrap/plastic bag recycling by returning this material to retail.

Key goals:
• Get plastic bags out of the curbside carts
• Reduce the volumes of single use bags
• Increase percentage of plastic film recycled by consumers and businesses in our community.
PRINCIPAL AUDIENCE AND PARTNERS

Consumers / General Public

- Educate on why & how

Businesses

- Common suite of materials
- Measure impact & improve results

Partnerships, Campaigns, Allies

- Share & expand best practices
WRAP:
TOOLS & COLLATERAL
LOCAL CAMPAIGN SUCCESS

• Increase from 41% to 53% of respondents knew that bags and film shouldn’t be in curbside carts

• 75% percent reduction in plastic bag contamination in recycling carts of residents who received cart tags

• 125% increase in material collected at participating Safeway stores with minimal increase in contamination
LOCAL CAMPAIGN SUCCESS

Phase 2: Current city-led commercial collection effort

- Use of grant money to promote “hub and spoke” approach with over 70 participating small businesses
- Support for central Post Office collection
- Efforts to encourage new collectors
- Leading efforts to expand to regional WA-OR campaign
LOCAL CAMPAIGN SUCCESS

Princeton Merchants Association

• Created “ABC” program to encourage Reduce, Reuse, then Recycle.
• Partnership with local merchants, major grocer and municipality.
• Many tons of material diverted in the first year.
WRAP provides tools and technical assistance for communities to provide “Return to Retail” messages to consumers and businesses to alleviate the challenges related to:

- Litter and Disposal
- MRF sortation and collection
- Low consumer awareness and participation
THANK YOU!

TONYA RANDELL
MOORE RECYCLING ASSOCIATES
TONYA.RANDELL@MOORERECYCLING.COM
919 360 4045