

# ENVIRONMENTAL BRIEFS

A Quarterly Review of News About Vinyl and the Environment

**Hospitals Recycle Vinyl IV Bags.** Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit and the Cleveland and Mayo Clinics are among five hospitals in the U.S. participating in the first-ever program to recycle vinyl IV solution bags. The pilot programs, developed with medical supply manufacturer Baxter Healthcare, will last through 1992 and will determine the feasibility of capturing material that hospitals must otherwise send to landfills or incinerate. Throughout the next few months, hospital employees will be trained to properly dispose of the IV products in specially designed green recyclable plastic bags. The collected materials then will be shipped to Turtle Plastics in Cleveland, Ohio, for recycling into vinyl floor runners, baseboards and fatigue mats. (*PR Newswire*, June 30, 1992)

**It's Made Out of What?** Is how William Reilly, administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, reacted to being told he was standing on floor tiles made of recycled vinyl when he visited the Vinyl Institute's booth at the recent government-sponsored Buy Recycled Products Trade Fair and Showcase in Washington, D.C. As a follow-up to the show, and to help purchasing agents and government procurement officers find products that incorporate recycled materials, the Vinyl Institute is in the process of compiling a list of companies manufacturing products from recycled vinyl. The free directory will list companies making products containing some percentage of either post-consumer or post-industrial recycled vinyl. Information will include the company name, address, phone, contact person, and a brief description of available products, including the percentage of recycled content. Companies interested in a free listing, or obtaining a copy of the directory when it is printed, should contact the Vinyl Environmental Resource Center at 1-800-969-VINYL (8469).

**Post-Consumer PVC, Our Specialty.** In the past, some plastic recyclers have been reluctant to work with PVC, but Clearvue Resource Management Ltd. is expanding its business by specializing in post-consumer vinyl bottles. Clearvue, in Amsterdam, N.Y., is taking advantage of the vinyl industry's desire to step up the pace of vinyl recycling. "We want to be the glue that will help vinyl recycling to grow," says Dave McGraw, vice president at Clearvue. The company has set up agreements to recycle vinyl bottles for three virgin resin suppliers: Occidental Chemical Corp., BFGoodrich Geon Vinyl Division and Georgia-Gulf Corp. Clearvue will sort, grind, wash and dry the vinyl and sell the flake to the resin suppliers, who will use it in recycled-content compounds. The company will use a VinylCycle automated sorter, loaned to it by the Vinyl Institute, to separate the vinyl bottles for recycling. "We are very enthusiastic about working with Clearvue because it has combined automatic sortation with grind and wash operations under one roof," says Robert H. Burnett, executive director of the Vinyl Institute.

**The Facts Are In.** A recently completed analysis of vinyl packaging's environmental impact offers new arguments against some of the negative publicity surrounding vinyl, and concludes its manufacture consumes less energy and produces less carbon dioxide than other packaging materials. Prepared for the Vinyl Institute by the consulting firm Chem Systems of Tarrytown, N.Y., the life-cycle analysis takes into account the energy consumption and environmental emissions from the production, use and eventual disposal of vinyl packaging. The analysis compared vinyl packaging and packaging made from glass, paperboard, paper and other plastics commonly used in similar packaging applications. Among the analysis' findings: vinyl packaging appears to require the least amount of production energy of all comparable materials and requires less fuel and raw materials than the other plastics studied. This energy savings translates into smaller releases of carbon dioxide, a major contributor to the greenhouse effect.

**Vinyl Passes Chemical Recycling Test.** A 10-percent level of vinyl in the feedstream presented no problems in the first full-scale test of chemical recycling of mixed plastics from consumer packaging waste. The success of the tests, conducted in a 440 million lbs./yr. hydrogenation unit for upgrading refinery residues at Veba Oel, AG's Kohloel-Anlage refinery in Bottrop, Germany, could point the way for another possible plastics recycling alternative. The next step is for a continuous run in the spring of 1993. It is estimated that, in a unit the size of the test facility, between 44 million and 88 million pounds of mixed plastics packaging wastes could be recycled per year. (*Plastics News*, May 18, 1992)

**Plastics Recycling—The Next Step.** In order for plastics recycling to get from where we are to where we want it to be, a host of issues need to be resolved and further links established, observes Bob Burnett, executive director of the Vinyl Institute, in a column appearing in the May 1992 issue of *Resource Recycling*. He notes that post-consumer plastics recycling does not lend itself to easy solutions,

Please contact the Vinyl Environmental Resource Center if you would like more information about any of the stories in this issue or any other matter related to vinyl and the environment. Call 1-800-969-VINYL (8469).

The Vinyl Institute is a national trade association representing the leading U.S. manufacturers of vinyl, vinyl feedstocks and additives, and vinyl film and sheet products. The Vinyl Institute is a division of SPI, The Society of the Plastics Industry, Inc.

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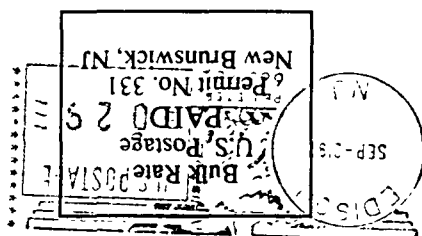
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and a higher degree of cooperation and mutual understanding among business, government and environmentalists is integral to the success of plastics recycling in the U.S. Further, a combination of incentives for curbside recycling collection, mechanisms for regional planning and cooperation, seed money for investment in recycling equipment and facilities, procurement incentives for recycled products, and realistic minimum content and recycling rate requirements is needed to take plastics recycling to the next level — past the collection of soda bottles and milk jugs. For copies of the editorial, contact the Vinyl Environmental Resource Center at 1-800-969-VINYL (8469).

**Let's See Those "Green" Vinyl Packages.** As part of its third annual V.I.P. (Vinyl In Packaging) Awards to showcase design and innovation in all forms of vinyl packaging, the Vinyl Packaging Council is seeking to honor innovations in recycled content and environmentally sensitive packaging. The contest is open to U.S. and Canadian packaging manufacturers, designers, vinyl resin and compound manufacturers and packaging end users. The winners of the 1992 V.I.P. Awards will be recognized at Pack Expo '92, November 8-12, at Chicago's McCormick Place. Winning packages will also be displayed as part of the Vinyl Institute's booth at the show. The entry deadline is Sept. 14. For more information, contact the Vinyl Institute at (201) 890-9299.

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