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NEWS

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BIELEFELD, GERMANY, LIFTS BAN ON PVC BUILDING PRODUCTS

MORRISTOWN, New Jersey, June 23, 1994 – The City of Bielefeld, which was the first city in Germany to impose a ban on the use of vinyl building products for environmental reasons, and which Greenpeace has showcased as setting an example for the world, has reversed its decision. Vinyl, otherwise known as PVC or polyvinyl chloride, is the most widely used plastic material in the construction trade.

Civil authorities in the city lifted the 1987 ban after reevaluating the environmental benefits of rigid vinyl in long term applications, such as window frames, pipes, flooring and roofing. City officials also noted the efforts of vinyl companies to develop collection and recycling systems, as well as replace stabilizers such as cadmium with calcium and zinc in the production process.

This action follows a number of similar moves in Germany. About a year ago, one of Germany's most "pro-green" states, the Hesse Parliament, withdrew its recommendation not to purchase vinyl products for public buildings, calling instead for the use of recycled-content vinyl products in those applications. In addition to federal and state parliaments, the Conference of the Environment Ministers has rejected a proposal to ban vinyl.

Environment Minister Klaus Topfer has announced that vinyl is not a threat to the health of workers and users, and former critic, Monica Griefahn, Environment Minister for Lower Saxony, said she no longer opposes vinyl.

The Vinyl Institute, A Division of The Society of the Plastics Industry

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