

The Current Status of the Bureau of
Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms'
Evaluation of Polyvinyl Chloride
Plastic Liquor Bottles*

As you all know, a June 30, 1973 termination date for the experimental period for use of PVC liquor bottles is rapidly approaching. Of course, prior to that time, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms will have to complete the procedures required of it by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. The next step involved in this process is BATF's filing of a Final Environmental Impact Statement.

As you all know, SPI has been in contact with the Bureau quite frequently within the past month regarding these activities. On January 8, 1973, SPI submitted Reply Comments to BATF designed to assist and provide input to BATF for the Final Environmental Impact Statement. On January 25, 1973, Bailie Associates filed its report with BATF, and SPI submitted a request under the Freedom of Information Act to view that Report. On February 12, 1973, SPI received a reply from Rex D. Davis of BATF denying the immediate release of the Bailie Report and instead indicating that Bailie's study will be attached to the Final Environmental Impact Statement. Interestingly enough, we received a call from one of our contacts at the Bureau on February 13 concerning BATF's denial. Our contact seemed almost apologetic and wanted to ascertain that SPI would not be offended by such a denial. He explained that, according to the Bureau's reasoning, since the Final Impact Statement would probably be released in about a month and since a number of other parties also requested copies of the Bailie Report, thus entailing a further administrative delay, all requests to view the Report would be denied. Although he would neither confirm nor deny it, our contact seemed to indicate that certain glass interests were also interested in viewing the Bailie Report.

BATF now is in the process of writing its Final Environmental Impact Statement, with an anticipated completion date of some time early in March, 1973. Subsequent to the filing of that Final Statement with the Council of Environmental Quality, all interested parties will be given an additional thirty days in which to comment. The Bureau then will be able to make a final determination subsequent to the elapse of that thirty day period. It has also informally been indicated to us that regardless of the direction of the BATF decision, the June 30, 1973 experimental-use termination date would not be extended again.

*/ Report prepared by Jerome H. Heckman for the Plastic Bottle Division Meeting of The Society of the Plastics Industry, Inc., on February 21, 1973.

SPI-23739

In terms of predictions, we are guardedly optimistic. Through our informal contacts, we have been advised that Bailie Associates has concluded in its Report that from the viewpoint of environmental impact, glass and plastics bottles are at a standoff. Additionally, it is our feeling that certain parties within BATF favor approval of the PVC liquor bottles while the opposition of the parties at the Environmental Protection Agency, raised at an earlier stage in the proceedings, at least for the present, has been tempered.