



Wayne Interchange Plaza II • 155 Route 46 West • Wayne, NJ 07470

NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

CONTACT: Patrick Gallagher
Edward Howard & Co.
(216) 781-2400

VINYL INDUSTRY URGES WISCONSIN TO RECONSIDER PVC PACKAGING RESTRICTIONS

WAYNE, New Jersey, September 22, 1992 — Citing potential competitive handicaps for packagers, higher costs and poorer performance for consumers, and the risk of increased energy consumption, representatives of the vinyl industry met with members of the Wisconsin Governor's Council on Recycling September 9th to present reasons why vinyl should not be singled out for restrictions in packaging applications in that state. A subcommittee of the Council had earlier proposed that vinyl (PVC, or polyvinyl) packaging be banned in Wisconsin because of problems recyclers have had separating vinyl from PET (polyethylene terephthalate) plastic.

Robert H. Burnett, executive director of the Vinyl Institute, the industry's trade association; David K. Schoeneck, president of Schoeneck Containers Inc. of New Berlin, Wisconsin; and William F. Carroll, director of commercial development, polymers and plastics, for Occidental Chemical Corporation, attended the meeting on behalf of the vinyl industry.

Addressing one of the committee's main concerns, Burnett noted that any plastic can contaminate another when they are collected for recycling.

(more)

CTL015009

"Just as PVC can contaminate PET, PET likewise can contaminate PVC. Even mixing soda-bottle grade PET with 'custom' PET can cause problems. Removing PVC from the recyclables stream will not solve this problem, nor will switching to PET for all clear bottles," he said.

Burnett noted that plastics recycling is a complex process requiring a number of specialized technologies. The vinyl industry, he said, has supported the development of a number of automated technologies specifically designed to produce the high quality, sorted product recyclers must have to compete economically.

"This technology benefits PET recyclers as well as vinyl recyclers," he added, "and the vinyl industry has openly shared what it has learned in developing these systems with the entire recycling industry."

Burnett also pointed out that while some plastics have struggled to find uses for recycled product, a host of applications already exist for recycled vinyl. Through the University of Toledo, the industry has identified nearly 100 potential uses for recycled vinyl and demand of nearly 500 million pounds per year — about twice the amount of post-consumer vinyl bottles currently available.

"Typically, a packaging material is chosen for the combination of properties it provides. In many cases, vinyl provides the best combination possible," Burnett said. "Depriving packagers of this choice could mean increased costs for them and consumers, a shorter shelf-life for their products and a package that does not perform as well under actual use conditions. In some cases, it might also put the packager at a competitive disadvantage because it would restrict the ability to quickly introduce new products or economically produce small quantities of product." He added that this is especially important for smaller companies or those that produce regional brands.

(more)

CTL015010

Burnett urged the Council to consider a product's total lifecycle, not just its recyclability, when weighing its impact on the environment. He cited a study recently completed for the Institute by Chem Systems, a Tarrytown, New York, consulting firm, that found that vinyl consumed the least amount of energy and raw materials, used the lowest level of fossil fuels, and produced the lowest levels of carbon dioxide of any of the plastics it studied.

"The ultimate objective of recycling is to reduce our use of natural resources and minimize the impact that the manufacture and disposal of a product have on the environment," he said. "Vinyl's environmental performance fully supports those objectives."

The Council agreed to temporarily table its recommendation to allow for further study at a future meeting.