Plastics Industry Initiatives to Reduce Waste and Expand Recycling Infrastructure

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Plastic waste trade, 1988 to 2016
CUMULATIVE AMOUNTS, IN MILLIONS OF METRIC TONS

**TOP EXPORTERS**

- Hong Kong*: 56.1
- U.S.: 26.7
- Japan: 22.2
- Germany: 17.6
- Mexico: 10.5
- U.K.: 9.26
- Netherlands: 7.71
- France: 7.55
- Belgium: 6.41
- Canada: 3.89

**Plastic waste exports from the U.S. in 2016**
- 693,444 metric tons
- 56% sent to China
- 32% H.K.
- Canada 3%
- Mexico 4%
- India 5%

**TOP IMPORTERS**

- China: 106
- U.S.: 64.5
- Netherlands: 8.49
- Germany: 6.43
- Belgium: 5.36
- Canada: 4.15

*Hong Kong directly exported more than 60 percent of its plastic waste imports in 2016.
Fueling Plastics: Series examines deep linkages between the fossil fuels and plastics industries, and the products they produce

Launched on September 20th, 2017, Fueling Plastics, an ongoing investigative series, examining the deep linkages between the fossil fuels and plastics industries and the products they produce, and exposing how the US shale gas boom fuels a massive buildout of plastics infrastructure in the United States and beyond. In the wake of Hurricane Harvey, and the release of air pollutants and toxic substances from petrochemical facilities across the Gulf region, these reports shed new light on the harmful impacts of fossil fuels at every stage of their lifecycle.

Fossil, Plastics, and Petrochemical Feedstocks outlines the role of fossil fuels in plastics production, detailing how over 99% of plastics are produced from chemicals sourced from fossil fuels. Because fossil fuel production is highly localized to specific areas, plastics production is also concentrated in specific regions where fossil fuel development is prominent, especially in the US Gulf Coast.

Asian states urged to sign treaty to avoid ‘tidal wave’ of foreign trash

August 07, 2018

Authorities in Thailand have been scrambling to contain a waste scandal after discovering a vast amount of plastic and electronic waste has been imported this year – often illegally – by factories involved in recycling.

Thais have been horrified to learn in recent weeks that hundreds of thousands of tons of electronic waste has been shipped into the country since China’s decision to stop taking waste from wealthy countries at the end of last year.
Chemicals of Concern in Food Packaging

- Bisphenol A
- Ortho-phthalates
- Styrene
- PVC
- Perchlorate
- Perfluoroalkylated substances
- And now...everything other than glass or stainless steel
Interest Group Activities

• **Natural Resources Defense Council**
  • 2014 - Generally Recognized as Secret Report (outgrowth of 2011 Pew project)
  • 2014 – 2016 - Food Additive Petitions to ban various phthalates, perfluorocarboxylates, and perchlorate in food contact uses

• **Food Packaging Forum (glass industry)**
  • 2012 – 2018 Publications and workshops on dangers of food contact materials
  • 2018 - Chemicals associated with plastic packaging (148 “highly hazardous”)

• **American Academy of Pediatrics**
  • 2018 - Policy Statement and Technical Report - Common Food Additives May Pose Health Risks to Children
Six Basel OEWG Outcomes

- Annex Amendments
- Partnership on Plastics Waste
- E-waste
- Household Waste Partnership
- Harmonized Customs Commodity coding
- Draft manuals on EPR

Next Meeting May 2019

KraftHeinz Becomes Fourth Big Company to Agree to As You Sow’s Request for Action and Timeline on Recyclable Packaging (P&G, Colgate-Palmolive; Unilever)
Americans want to recycle

Recyclables are valuable feedstocks

US exported 16 million tons of commodities to China - $5.2 billion
New End Market Opportunities

Secured various PE film samples
Understand range of contamination and necessary processing methods
Perform standard testing on sample bales
Identify potential end markets

Path Forward
More equipment testing
End market assessment
MRF economic analysis
Community MRF demonstration
Business partners to use material
Material Recovery for the Future

Pilot project to demonstrate the technical and economic feasibility of recycling household flexible plastic packaging from municipal residential single-stream recycling.

estimating 3,100 tons/year of film feedstock will be produced
Domestic Recycling Infrastructure Act
Purposes

- Improve national infrastructure
- Prevent litter
- Combat negative economic impacts
- Increase recyclable material collection
Use of Funding

Recycling Related **Technology**

- Increases collection rates
- Expands curbside
- Expands materials
- Improves quality
- Improves sorting/separation

PLASTICS

**INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION**
Use of Funding

Recycling Related Programs

Consumer education and job training
Transitioning between programs
Enhancing curbside performance
Promoting public space recycling
Developing rural markets
End market development
Eligibility - States

Resource Conservation and Recovery Act compliance

Authority to distribute grants

Solid waste management plans

Establish recycling benchmarks
Eligibility - Municipalities

Solid waste management plans

Education outreach programs

Establish recycling benchmarks

Collect at least three materials

Own/operate/contract for recycling services
Next Steps

Continue to refine language
Confer with EPA
Find Congressional Champion(s)
Secure funding mechanism
Consult states and localities