

CalRecycle rejects CARE's stewardship plan, again

At the May 15 public meeting of CalRecycle, [CalRecycle disapproved the latest Carpet America Recovery Effort \(CARE\) five-year stewardship plan](#) (PDF). CARE can resubmit their plan within 60 days and address CalRecycle's findings, that CARE's funding mechanism and planned grants and subsidies do not comply with statutory requirements. Documents related to the May 15, 2018 decision are on [CalRecycle's public notice website](#). A [timeline of the carpet stewardship program status](#) details the decisions and actions since the December 2016 disapproval of CARE's plan, including the April 25, 2018 decision penalizing CARE \$821,250 for non-compliance in 2013, 2014, and 2015 (including \$365,000, or \$1000 per day, for 2015).

News

First U.S. municipality to require Cradle to Cradle certification for all public projects installing carpet

An [article in Building Green](#) covers news of a [new City and County of San Francisco regulation](#) (PDF) requiring carpet products installed in publicly-funded "projects like public schools, libraries, and government buildings" be "Cradle to Cradle Certified Silver or better. This makes San Francisco the first municipality to mandate Cradle to Cradle certification." The regulation also includes minimum recycled content requirements, prohibitions on a long list of hazardous chemicals, and limits City purchases to carpet tiles because they allow for easy replacement and minimize waste. The regulation generally prohibits cushion-backed carpet tiles and broadloom (rolled) carpets, with a few exceptions. In [SF Approved](#), "which lists all products and services that meet the city's health and environmental requirements, **there are currently only three brands with products that meet all criteria included in the regulation: Shaw, Patcraft, and Tandus.**"

Sustainable Materials Management in Oregon

"Sustainable Materials Management (SMM) is a relatively new concept. Some recycling professionals use it as a fresh way of describing the integrated waste management hierarchy... 'a systems approach to using and reusing materials more productively over their entire life cycles.'

What exactly does this mean? The state of Oregon has been an early adopter of SMM (as defined by the EPA), and a new generation of policy and programs taking hold in the Beaver State provides some ideas of what SMM could look like in practice." This [Resource Recycling article](#) by David Allaway and Shannon Davis "describes Oregon's SMM framework and explores how the concept is starting to change Oregon's approach to recycling, most notably through efforts that aim to achieve the same environmental benefits of recycling using a broader suite of approaches."

EPR, Packaging, and Plastics

CalRecycle delays packaging reform

In a May 2, 2018 email, "CalRecycle has postponed the release of the [Packaging Reform](#) paper in light of recent changes to China's import policies. Staff are in the process of ensuring that the recommendations thoughtfully and adequately reflect the implications and new realities of China's National Sword and anticipate bringing the draft recommendations to the Director at a regularly-scheduled monthly public meeting later this year." CalRecycle held [packaging workshops in March and October 2017](#).

Industry must share burden to reduce plastic pollution

The Product Stewardship Institute (PSI) [responded to the Plastics Industry Association](#) by calling on industry "to take the next step closer to home: help California and other state and local governments in the U.S. by taking part in extended producer responsibility [EPR] for packaging, designing plastic products to be safer and more recyclable, helping to expand recycling infrastructure and education, and focusing on the production of high-value products instead of problematic convenience items."

Innovation without consideration

An [article in Recycling Today](#) quotes speakers at WasteExpo 2018 identifying recycling problems:

The value of commodities recovered at material recovery facilities (MRFs) does not cover the costs to process these materials, and continual changes in consumer packaging don't help.

"Brands are innovating their products' packaging without a concern for the waste stream," said speaker Steve Alexander, president of the Association of Plastic Recyclers (APR). "They continue to push product innovations without testing if a specific product is recyclable. In many instances, brands don't realize the pump in their bottle is not recyclable or that the ink on the packaging bleeds.

For all materials, there's no requirement for design. It doesn't have to be compatible with the infrastructure we have in place, and that's a huge disconnect."

He added, referencing consumer packaging companies, "You're innovating your packaging far quicker than we can tell residents how to sort it."

British Columbia's EPR for packaging

In a [March 27 CBC News article](#), Allen Langdon, Recycle BC's managing director, said:

"managing the entire province's recycling on a system-wide basis — instead of via individual municipalities — and working directly with packaging producers is the only practical way to deal with the speed at which packaging and the markets for recyclables are changing.

The current system of managing recycling is not working, and anyone that thinks it's going to continue to work that way is not keeping up with where the trends are going."

Four things businesses can do to fix the plastics problem

In a [February article](#), Ellen MacArthur, founder of the Ellen MacArthur Foundation (the mission of which is to accelerate the transition to a circular economy), and Paul Polman, CEO of Unilever, wrote about Unilever's pledge to use 100% reusable, recyclable or compostable plastic packaging by 2025:

"Constructive dialogue between industry and policy-makers is a prerequisite" to progress. "Policy-makers are essential actors to provide the infrastructure and create the enabling regulatory landscape for a circular economy to unfold... **Business leaders need to positively engage with governments on the required policies to shift the system, for example the implementation of effective extended producer responsibility schemes.**

Given the scale of the issue, our models of production and consumption deserve a proper shock, one we need to join forces to initiate, and which will reveal the economic as well as environmental benefits we're currently overlooking."

UK supermarkets commit to plastics recycling

The [UK Plastics Pact](#) is a voluntary commitment by UK supermarkets that by 2025 all plastic packaging can be reused, recycled or composted, according to an [article in The Guardian](#).