

NRC SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS MANAGEMENT SUMMIT, MAY 12-13, 2015 – WHITE PAPER

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PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

Consultant specializing in recycling and product stewardship for Reclay StewardEdge, a firm headquartered in Toronto that contributes to economic and environmental sustainability through the design, implementation and management of effective and efficient product stewardship programs.

Over 34 years of experience in private, public, institutional and nonprofit sectors:

- 26 years of consulting experience serving federal/state/local agencies, manufacturing/recycling companies and industry trade associations across the U.S.
- 10 years of service as a National Recycling Coalition board member; Carolina Recycling Association co-founder and board member for 6 years; former board member, Recycle Florida Today
- 6 years managing Mecklenburg County, NC's recycling program

Focus areas:

- Policies that drive increased recycling
- Product stewardship strategy development
- Recycling market development
- Stakeholder engagement in the product stewardship arena

PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

Climate change is real and a serious threat to life on earth as we know it. Ocean health, in particular, is rapidly declining due to climate change as well as acidification, marine debris, and other pollution sources. It is time for ALL of us to exercise leadership and do what is right to successfully transition to a circular materials economy, which we know is essential for mitigating these critical environmental and human health concerns. Sustainable materials management is integral to achieving this transition. As professionals in this arena, it is up to us to lead our organizations and society at large in taking the game-changing steps needed to prevent the generation of waste and keep materials in the resource stream. It is not a matter of how can we afford to do so; we cannot afford *not* to do so! We *must* determine how to equitably share the responsibility for implementing the necessary actions and paying the associated costs. We know this needs to be done. It is time to just do it! *If not us, then who???* *If not now, then when???*

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Stop the duck-and-cover/dodging of responsibility and agree to act constructively.
2. Stop tolerating the irresponsibility of our colleagues and their respective organizations.
3. Collaborate in finding and implementing solutions:
 - Agree on the necessary infrastructure changes and policies needed to convert to a sustainable materials management system. We already know what are the best practices. This is about setting priorities and acting in a way that recognizes that the system changes needed cannot be fixed through provision of recycling carts in selected municipalities alone.
 - Negotiate an equitable funding strategy and agree to advocate as one voice to bring this about.

What is needed is political will. Lack of political will is the single most critical barrier that we all must work to overcome.