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Background Information:

I have worked in the solid waste management and recycling industry in North Carolina and lately, in South Carolina as well, since 1988. My career in this field has been in local government, the private service industry and in the non-profit sector as well. I have worked in sales, customer service, program planning and implementation, operations, education and outreach and other areas. I am now involved in non-profit management as the executive director for the Carolina Recycling Association (CRA) whose mission it is to "Advance Waste Reduction & Recycling in the Carolinas". The CRA has been working with this mission in mind since 1989. I also serve as a director on the Board of the NC Chapter of SWANA whose mission it is to advance the practice of environmentally and economically sound management of municipal solid waste in North Carolina.

General Comments:

I am pleased regarding the pre-SMM Summit effort to educate and establish consensus on what is meant by Sustainable Materials Management. As with any effort to come to an understanding we have to start with clear definitions. I am very interested regarding the overall effort to promote Sustainable Materials Management in general because it is a more holistic approach to the issues we face. No matter how much and how well we recycle we can't accomplish what really needs to happen. We need a complete shift in the way we think about the environment and the direct and indirect impacts our decisions have. We need an educated and engaged society that understands the interrelationships of nature and materials management. Many of the decisions that will prove beneficial overall will need to be made upstream of the recycling system and involve business and political leaders rather than individual consumers. Sustainable focused design is an important part of this.

National SMM Plan Recommendations:

Institute tax incentives and or other public policy initiatives across the board favorable to sustainable products and services and resource conservation.

Level the playing field for reuse and recycling versus extraction by eliminating any incentives for virgin material use.

Work within such already established systems as the LEED Certification Process to utilize the synergies that exist. Waste minimization, recycling, use of recycled content materials, local procurement, design for energy efficiency are all part of this system. The practice of architects, engineers, owners and operators sitting down with all parties involved in the design and construction process of a "green building" before the project really begins is a model that can work in many other areas.

Benchmark successful programs and initiatives used in Europe and other locations. Determine how these might be modeled here in the US. Educate at every turn on all levels from pre-school to elected officials.

Work toward national policy for sustainable materials management.