

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

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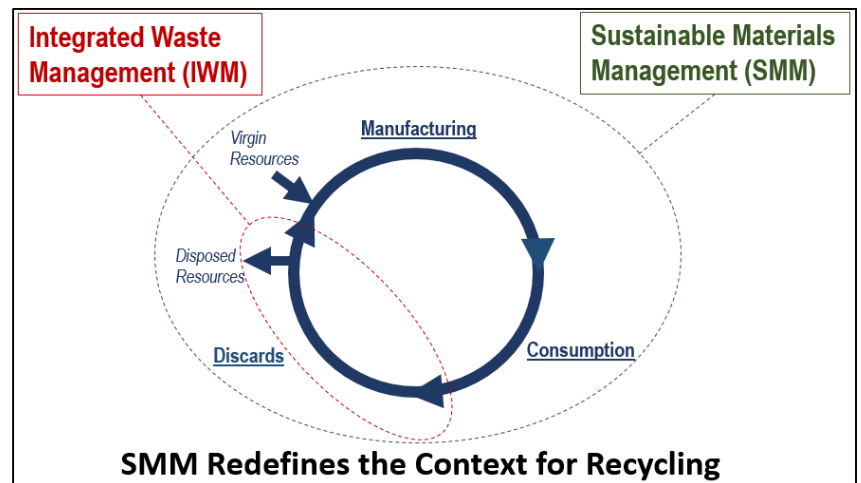
BACKGROUND

Professional Background

- Consultant specializing in recycling industry development and sustainable materials management
- 27 years of experience in private, public and non-profit sectors:
 - Clients and Partners: federal/state/local agencies, manufacturing/recycling companies and industry trade associations across the U.S. and in Canada and Europe
 - Director, Northeast Recycling Council (1994 - 1998)
 - Manager, Recycling Loan Fund/Policy Office, CA Integrated Waste Management Board (1990 - 1994)
- Focus areas:
 - Recycling market development strategies, policies and programs
 - Market and industry research
 - Public/private collaborative initiatives
 - Economic & environ. impact analysis

Perspective on SMM Policy Directions

- Materials use underpins our economy and influences most sustainability issues. According to EPA, materials use comprises 42% of U.S. GHG emissions.
- Recycling advocates have focused mainly on expanding landfill diversion rates. Most any “market” has been acceptable in this cause.
- Fewer resources have been focused on source reduction, reuse, design or broad sustainability goals, which are more difficult.
- SMM puts recycling in a broader context, and can help illuminate opportunities and align activities across the materials life cycle, especially related to design and materials innovations.
- The Integrated Waste Management hierarchy (i.e., reduce, reuse, recycle) should still guide local discard management, but some activities could be updated as a part of a broader SMM agenda.
- The most promising SMM solutions (and threats) may: transcend any one industry; involve tradeoffs; and/or emerge unexpectedly and rapidly (e.g., the Internet reduced paper use and spawned the sharing economy).



NATIONAL SMM PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Although gaining momentum, SMM is in a very early stage and most interested parties are fatigued by information overload and competing agendas. At this moment, two distinct but related strategies may be best:

1. Continue and expand efforts to strengthen recycling infrastructure as part of a broad SMM agenda.

- Boost recovery through higher participation and capture rates (e.g., harmonized programs and education).
- Invest in new infrastructure where needed to optimize coverage in all U.S. regions and industry sectors.
- Markets matter: emphasize material quality and value, and maximize GHG reductions and other broad goals.
- Fully integrate source reduction and reuse into existing recycling-focused programs at all levels.
- Communicate discard management challenges and opportunities, and collaborate with upstream partners.

2. Set the table for SMM progress over the long term.

- Define SMM in a concise and compelling way, and promote an effective agenda for action. Embrace (not replace) existing frameworks like Cradle-to-Cradle, the Natural Step and Zero Waste (among others).
- Create more complete and accessible data sources by exploiting new information technologies and by integrating SMM measures into established industry/government sustainability and economic activity reports.
- Establish a standard SMM Profile for use in tracking and publicizing progress across industries over time.
- Foster entrepreneurial solutions through networking and collaboration across the material life cycle.