



United States Business Council
for Sustainable Development

By-Product Synergy and the Materials Marketplace

For the past 20 years, the United States Business Council for Sustainable Development (US BCSD) has worked successfully with businesses, governments, academics and NGOs to create regional closed-loop business networks where one company's waste becomes another company's raw material. In addition to diverting waste from landfills, these re-use activities generate significant cost savings, energy savings, and create new business opportunities. A future goal of this work includes what materials should be edited out of the materials chain, and how this might be scaled even further. To accelerate implementation and scale up material reuse efforts the US BCSD developed an online Materials Marketplace software in 2014 that is being deployed in US cities and through national business organizations in the United States including the Corporate EcoForum and the World BCSD.

Policy Recommendations

Recognize Sustainable Materials Management as a Carbon Reduction Strategy

Years of research have shown that waste reduction is associated with lowering greenhouse gases that exacerbate climate change. It is time we recognize and reward this contribution by making waste reduction a recognized carbon reduction strategy. By adopting materials reuse as a core strategy, governments will be empowering companies, communities and countries to move toward a more circular economy where wastes become resources that can be used over and over again as they are in the natural world. Read more: <http://usbcscd.org/2014/12/05/materials-management-as-carbon-reduction-strategy>.

Create a Regulatory Environment that Enables Pathways to Beneficial Materials Reuse

The US BCSD believes EPA has a duty to encourage and provide incentives for efficient and effective beneficial use of secondary materials that result in a smaller total environmental footprint than disposal of those materials and use of virgin natural resources. Countries around the world are making material reuse a centerpiece in sustainability programs and greenhouse gas reduction strategies. EPA should do more to remove regulatory barriers and promote beneficial use of secondary materials that are consistent with RCRA, reduce the industrial environmental footprint and greenhouse gas emissions, and are protective of people and the environment.

Open the Door for Sustainable Materials Management to Qualify for Energy Efficiency Incentives

Sustainable materials management saves energy. We believe that the Federal Government has an opportunity to remove regulatory barriers and correct market failures to accelerate investment and development of material reuse and management as an additional and cost effective energy efficiency and climate strategy. Over the past four years, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and other agencies have agreed on revolutionary new requirements for the efficiency of motor vehicles, and have greatly expanded programs promoting energy efficiency in buildings and industry. There are still market failures that prevent sound investments in efforts to pull materials from the waste stream for secondary reuse.