

Addendum to National Recycling Coalition
Policy Positions

January, 1994

NRC POLICY RESOLUTION ON A HIERARCHY OF RECOVERABLE RESOURCE AND WASTE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Approved by the NRC Board of Directors on May 21, 1994

HIERARCHY OF RECOVERABLE RESOURCE AND WASTE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Rationale

Source reduction, reuse, and recycling can conserve energy and natural resources, create jobs and employment opportunities, and conserve landfill space. Waste disposal methods, such as incineration and landfilling, are less preferable.

Policy

The National Recycling Coalition endorses and supports cost-effective, efficient, reliable, and environmentally sound management systems for recoverable resources and waste.

Policies should be adopted at local, state, and federal levels of government to pursue a hierarchy of methods for managing recoverable resources and waste. Such a hierarchy should be established consisting of, in order, source reduction, reuse, recycling from source separated materials, composting of source separated organics, processing mixed waste for recovery of materials, conversion of selected non-recoverable combustible fractions for fuel products or energy, and landfilling and incineration.

The National Recycling Coalition strongly encourages state and local governments that conduct comprehensive planning to bring about such programs as quickly as possible. These programs place priority on source reduction, reuse, recycling from source separated materials, and composting of source separated organics to maximize productive use and economic value of resources and to minimize the amount of waste requiring disposal.

1. Source separated composting should be distinguished from mixed municipal solid waste (MSW) composting for regulatory and marketing purposes.
2. Operational and quality standards should be established based on feedstock/end use considerations.
3. Government should increase procurement of compost products.
4. The solid waste hierarchy should be modified (for environmental and economic reasons) to include:
 - on-site composting as reuse
 - source separated composting as recycling
5. Compost feedstocks and end products should be regulated as a resource, not a waste.
6. Information should be developed on the uses and benefits of compost
7. Technical and economic data should be collected and disseminated in regards to collection and processing methods, facility designs, and end-use applications.
8. End-use applications, utilization technologies and market specifications should be developed for compost products.
9. Model procedures should be developed for permitting and siting source separated composting facilities.
10. Guidelines should be developed for labeling compost/compostable products.
11. Market based goals should be established for organic material recovery through source separated composting.
12. Feedstock criteria and a database should be developed.
13. Criteria should be established for operator training and certification
14. Financing strategies should be developed for funding the development and operations of source separated composting facilities.

POLICY RESOLUTION TO PROMOTE SOURCE SEPARATED COMPOSTING

Approved by the NRC on October 11, 1993

Rationale

Clean, source separated compostables, such as leaves, grass clippings, brush, food scraps, and non-recyclable paper, and represent a significant portion of the municipal solid waste stream. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has projected that food scraps and yard debris combined will make up almost 25 percent of the municipal solid waste stream by 1995. Studies have indicated that source separated composting, when combined with a traditional recycling program, has the potential to help communities divert up to 70 percent of their discards from the municipal solid waste stream. These findings, plus the fact that many communities have encountered difficulties in meeting their waste reduction and recycling goals, have led to renewed public interest in composting as a viable solid waste management option. Source separated composting, which involves collecting and processing source separated organic materials to form nutrient-rich soil product, can be done by homeowners, farmers, local government, and private facilities. This method of composting requires generators to separate their organic compostable materials from recyclables and materials destined for disposal. In the source separated composting process, compostables are collected and processed separately from the rest of the waste stream. This is unlike mixed MSW composting, which involves collecting mixed MSW, processing the waste material to remove recyclables and other inorganic material and then composting the remaining organic material. Studies have shown that source separated compost is four to twenty times less likely to contain lead contaminant than compost that is screened and separated at a mixed municipal solid waste composting facility. Therefore, composting through source separation creates a more viable end product

Policy

The National Recycling Coalition desires to promote composting of the above stated materials and the use of compost by:

- 1) Recognizing backyard composting as a source reduction method.
- 2) Maximizing composting and recycling as an integral part of waste and resource management to achieve the benefits of environmental protection, resource conservation, and social and economic development
- 3) Including source separated composting as a separate component within the municipal solid waste management hierarchy equal to recycling.
- 4) Supporting production and procurement of composted product and mulch by all levels of the public and private sectors.
- 5) Recommending research into new applications for composted product and mulch.
- 6) Supporting the development of standards for compost and mulch.

The National Recycling Coalition also recommends that the following priority issues identified at a national symposium on source separated composting sponsored by the National Recycling Coalition be addressed to promote source separated composting:

- **Credible - Information for Consumers** -Establish defining terms and measurement methods in order to educate the public. This includes developing labeling guidelines with regard to recyclability to protect the consumer from misleading and confusing information and advertising.
- **Market Distortions and Environmental Externalities** -Address federal materials use policy to encourage more efficient use of materials and energy and repair the negative image of environmental policy as economically undesirable.
- **Coordination** - The federal government should encourage efforts to harmonize state, federal and international environmental policies and coordinate policy development on international aspects of the environment, U.S. competitiveness, trade and technology.

DESIGN FOR RECYCLABILITY POLICY SOLUTION

Approved by NRC on October 11, 1993

Rationale

Because waste reduction and recycling are integral parts of waste and resource management and contribute environmental and economical benefits design for reuse, source reduction, and recyclability should be encouraged among product and package manufacturers.

Policy

Historically, product and package design has looked at every component of design - marketability, weight, volume Freshness, appearance, etc. -except recyclability. This is due in part, to a lack of awareness and a failure to educate product and package designers and manufacturers. NRC recognizes the need for material neutral design for recyclability guidelines. NRC recommends that product and package manufacturers:

- Develop system-oriented designs for product/packages recyclability based on available technologies.
- Minimize component variety by reducing the kinds of materials and potential contaminants used to produce a product (paper, metals, glue, resin types)
- Ensure component separability and compatibility -each material used should separate in today's typical recycling process.
- Publish and disseminate technological information on the presence and removal potential of contaminants to recyclers, processors, and remanufacturers.

NRC encourages product designers and manufacturers, when possible, to:

- use compatible materials;
- relax color standards for packaging to increase end markets for post-consumer materials for example. relax color standards for HDPE bottles and use clear glass when possible
- avoid melt-reactive material combinations;
- avoid non-separable colorant such as direct printing on clear bottles.

Four areas inadequately addressed by market forces or regulations that should be addressed by the federal government include:

Research -Commission research to determine which materials and waste streams are of the most concern (identify contaminants) and how product design guidelines could address them

REVISED POLICY RESOLUTION ON BUILDING CONSTRUCTION CODE

Approved by the NRC on October 11,1993

Rationale

Source reduction, reuse and recycling are increasingly becoming an integral component of the nation's waste management system. As the waste disposal crisis deepens, many communities have enacted or are considering the enactment of recycling programs to help offset their disposal crisis.

Residences, commercial (public and private), and institutional multi-family and multi-unit buildings pose unique obstacles in the implementation of and compliance with local recycling efforts in densely populated urban areas. These obstacles include, but are not limited to, lack of storage space access, enforcement and education. Because most local building codes do not currently make provisions for recycling systems, these obstacles are likely to continue.

Source reduction benefits provided by incorporating this design principle in site development projects and building codes include the reduction of waste disposal and recycling costs, as there is less waste in the form of tree stumps, tree parts and brush, to be managed. The burden on solid waste management facilities is lessened and the need for lawn care is minimized.

Policy

Municipal governments should direct and assist their Building Departments to develop codes and guidelines for the implementation of recycling programs that are consistent with the safety, health and well being of building residents.

Local building codes should require new buildings and major renovations to explicitly provide for recycling systems as an integral component of the buildings' waste management systems. Special attention should be paid to provisions addressing office and multi-tenant buildings especially in terms of storage and collection areas for recyclable materials.

Building codes should be developed jointly by the appropriate agencies administering local recycling programs and by all other pertinent local agencies to ensure that specific requirements of building codes are consistent with local recycling programs and maintain the highest standards of health and safety of building residences in their implementation. In addition, the national Uniform Building Code should be modified to conform with these considerations.

Site development projects should incorporate a strategy for retaining and protecting trees of building construction sites, as this is a sound design principle and a valuable source reduction technique.

Cross-reference: Legislation and Regulation

Recommended Policy Resolution to Prohibit NRC
sponsored events in localities which have constitutional
provisions prohibiting the adoption of, or enforcement of laws,
or ordinances, protecting the civil rights of individuals

WHEREAS, the NRC desires to support an atmosphere of non- discrimination against people in our society, knowing that the membership consists of people from a wide variety of backgrounds and beliefs; and

WHEREAS, passage of laws designed to legalize discrimination toward a segment of society places the civil rights of all people in jeopardy; and

WHEREAS, results of open discrimination often lead to civil rights violations in employment, housing, health care, and public treatment of certain segments of our society; and

WHEREAS, it is the intent of the NRC to oppose violations of civil rights aimed at persons because of their race, sex, sexual orientation, religion, color, national origin, age, disability, or condition; and

WHEREAS, NRC funds should not be allowed to be used to condone bigotry; and

WHEREAS, the NRC's objections can be effectively "heard," by not supporting a city, or state in an economic way, and

WHEREAS, the NRC desires to prohibit funding of NRC sponsored conventions, exhibits, board meetings, or special events in cities, or states that have constitutional provisions prohibiting the adoption of, or enforcement of laws, or ordinances protecting the civil rights of individuals; Now Therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, by the National Recycling Coalition Board of Directors, that no NRC funds shall be expended for NRC sponsored events in any city, or state that has, accepts, or adheres to constitutional provisions, laws, or ordinances which prohibit, or violate, the civil rights of individuals based on their race, sex, sexual orientation, religion, color, national origin, age, disability or condition.

POLICY RESOLUTION TO SPONSOR POINT OF PURCHASE NOTIFICATION OF
LOCAL RECYCLABILITY

Approved by the NRC in April 1993

Rationale

In its mission statement, the National Recycling Coalition states that one of its goals is to maximize recycling as the preferred method of solid waste management. There is an almost universal lack of understanding among American consumers as to the meaning of most recycling terms and symbols, including the exact meaning of the term "recyclable." This confusion often leads to endless arguments over whether or not a particular item is technically recyclable or not, when it is really more important whether that product can be recycled in the particular city where it is purchased.

There needs to be a system that can easily identify for the consumer whether the product in question is recyclable locally. A notice could be placed near items in a retail establishment that can be recycled in that same town, and that notice could also notify customers of the presence of a complete list of local recycling practices that could be kept at the service counter.

The resulting competition of rival packagers wanting to earn the right to proudly wear the notice would do more to achieve the growth of increasingly inclusive recycling programs than anything that has yet been tried. This policy holds promise of great success because it is strictly voluntary; no vendor is made to follow any rules or regulations unless that vendor voluntarily chooses to use the stickers.

Policy

The National Recycling Coalition Board of Directors approves a policy of supporting the notification of consumers of the local recyclability of packages or products at the point of their purchase through the use of a notice on or near where the product is displayed for sale. NRC also recommends that local merchants work cooperatively with local recyclers to develop a list of products that are recyclable in their community.