

LEGISLATION AND REGULATION RCRA REAUTHORIZATION

Rationale

Reauthorization of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act provides an appropriate opportunity for federal decision makers to create, support and enable a variety of important measures to encourage waste prevention, recycling, composting and material utilization.

Policy

The National Recycling Coalition encourages Congress to reauthorize the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act as soon as possible. To address these critical concepts, RCRA reauthorization should:

- 1) Place a strong emphasis on market development for recyclable commodities. Efforts that address end use markets for plastic, glass and paper are critically important. Action to develop markets is needed at the federal level.
- 2) Place a high priority on the immediate development of national guidelines and standards for recycled content, refill/reuse rates and source reduction standards. Such standards should be established by commodity (glass, paper, metal, plastic, etc.), application (paper grades, container types, etc.) and activity (eating, housing, transportation, clothing, health care, information, etc.). Specific utilization rates should be established and pegged to target years. In establishing these guidelines and standards, the feasibility of the following material utilization rates (percent of material generated that is reused/refilled, source reduced, recycled) should be established by 1993:
 - Glass, metal, plastic and wood packaging should meet a 25% utilization rate by 1995 and a 50% utilization rate by the year 2000.
 - Paper packaging, newsprint and printing and writing paper should meet a 40% utilization rate by 1995 and a 65% utilization rate by the year 2000.
 - Aggregate municipal solid waste production should be reduced by 20% by the year 2000, with waste production of industry materials (i.e., excluding yard debris) reduced by at least 10% by 2000.
 - The feasibility of meeting the targeted utilization rates by the specified years should also be evaluated to ensure they are both practical and achievable. Rates that may be recommended by the RAC and other environmental, governmental, academic and industry groups representing each major recycling commodity should also be evaluated in selecting the utilization rates for target years.

NRC Policy Document #1

- 3) Allow industry to meet these standards voluntarily unless-the end markets are not available to meet the diversion targets, as described under item 6 below.
- 4) Include recycled content requirements (designed to achieve the utilization rates established under item 2 above) for applications (paper grades, container types. etc.), These requirements would be triggered where industry does not meet the guidelines and standards voluntarily.
- 5) Include a program element that establishes, enforces and measures national recycling rates, waste production rates and destructive disposal rates.
- 6) Establish a national recycling goal consisting, at minimum, of a 25% average recycling rate of materials currently disposed in the municipal solid waste stream by 1995 and 50% by the year 2000.
- 7) Establish a national recycling goal consisting of higher recycling rates as long as they are supported with the establishment of adequate financial and market development measures to assist local governments in implementing them. The following recycling rates could be supported under this circumstance: 40% of all metals, glass and paper, and 25% of all plastics. ..
- 8) Establish a national ban on yard waste being disposed of in landfills by the year 2000.
- 9) Ban from combustion and municipal solid waste composting facilities all household hazardous waste and all recyclable and compostable materials for which there is a market.
- 10) Recognizing that recycling rates do not address waste production, establish a national goal of reducing waste production by 20% by the year 2000, with industrial materials reduced by at least 10% by the year 2000 (all from 1990 rates and per capita). As a corollary, solid waste disposal rates would be reduced by at least 18% by the year 1995 and by at least 42% by the year 2000 (assuming a 1990 recycling rate of about 14%).
- 11) Provide technical and financial support to local and state governments in establishing an infrastructure for source reduction, recycling and composting systems capable of meeting the national goals outlined above.
- 12) Support local government establishment of scrap tire, battery, and household hazardous waste management programs designed with a goal of maximum material recovery.
- 13) Expand the list of materials for which the EPA must develop procurement guidelines for purchase of products with recycled content, with a specific schedule of dates for completion. The additional guidelines at a minimum should include glass, ferrous and nonferrous metals, and plastic. Product standards for compost made from source-separated organic materials and compost made from mixed municipal solid waste should also be developed. Guidelines should specifically set minimum content

NRC Policy Document #1

standards for these materials.

- 14) Require that all federal paper purchases meet established recycled content guidelines (as per item 2 above),
- 15) Further establish a minimum of a 10% price preference in federal government procurement policy for purchase of items containing recovered materials and meeting all applicable recycled content guidelines. Further establish that federal agencies give preference to items with the greatest practicable amount of recycled content Favor should be given to products that use post-consumer recycled content.
- 16) Establish terms and conditions under which manufacturers and other advertisers may make environmental claims that are consistent with the National Recycling Coalition's Product Labeling policy.

Cross-reference: Waste Reduction Standards; Market Development; Procurement; Design for Recycling; Product Labeling