

Maine DEP Seeks Proposals For Using Carpet-Like Fiber Waste

Last week, the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) said it has obtained through court order about 27,000 tons of waste polyester and polypropylene "carpet-like fiber" from an abandoned 70-acre shooting range and is seeking proposals to "to have the material turned into an alternative fuel for industrial boilers or other beneficial use." DEP said the material will burn and poses a fire risk.

"This is an opportunity to use what was once considered waste and turn it into an alternative fuel, thus reducing impacts to our environment and creating new, innovative jobs," said Maine Governor Paul R. LePage. *"Environmental stewardship and job creation can be done together."*

The deadline for submitting proposals is September 18.

For more information, go to <http://www.maine.gov/dep/news/news.html?id=585439>.

Statistics & Trends

German Environmental Agency To Investigate Possible Planned Obsolescence In Electronic Products

To reduce waste generation, recently some German legislators have called for improving the durability of products to extend their life. Last week, Germany's Federal Environment Agency (UBA) announced it would be investigating the durability of electronic equipment to try to determine why such equipment does not last longer. Is poor product design and manufacturing at fault or is it a case of planned obsolescence to stimulate additional product sales.

To find an answer, UBA said it has commissioned the Öko-Institut e.V. and the University of Bonn to conduct research on the issue beginning next month. The study is expect to be completed in 2015, but a interim report should be ready next fall.

According to the UBA announcement, "The study will direct a special focus on electrical and electronic equipment as these products are most often prone to wear out prematurely or become defective. The design and range of these products also undergo radical change. The study will seek to determine whether and how much the average service life and failure probability of these devices have changed over the past few decades. Interviews and feedback from repair shops, test institutes and other stakeholders will be applied in research."

The UBA announcement can be reviewed at http://www.umweltbundesamt.de/uba-info-presse-e/2013/pe13-033_defective_electronic_equipment_accidental_or_pre_meditated.htm.

Litter Generation In Australia Declines Slightly

According to Keep Australia Beautiful, both the amount of litter in Australia fell slightly in 2012-2013. The data (National Litter Index) is available in a 90-page report released last week by the organization. The report tracks seven major types of litter - cigarette butts, plastic, glass, metal, paper/cardboard, illegally dumped materials and miscellaneous.

The volume of litter per 1,000 square meters of 963 sites sampled fell to 6.13 liters in 2012-2013, compared to 6.24 liters in 2011-2012. However, litter increased at some types of sites such as beaches.

The most littered items were cigarette butts, plastic, and paper/cardboard, in descending order. The most litter-prone types of sites sampled were retail locations and shopping centers.

Download the complete http://kab.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/8837_KAB_National-Litter-Index_2012-13_Summary_FINAL.pdf.

UK Reports Successful In Boosting "Home Improvement Sector's Landfill Diversion Rate

Yesterday, the United Kingdom's Waste Resources Action Programme (WRAP) said that landfill diversion of waste from the UK's home improvement (do-it-yourself) business sector signatories reduce waste sent to landfill by 83 percent last year. Reduction of packaging increased by 25 percent.

To put the percentages into perspective, in 2007 signatories sent 108,908 tons of waste to landfill, but last year the level dropped to only 14,610 tons. In 2007, 113,627 tons of packaging was used, but last year the amount was only 74,632 tons.

"Overall, the activities of all signatories have improved product and packaging design that make recycling easier, said WRAP CEO Liz Goodwin. "There is now clearer recycling guidance for suppliers and consumers, particularly with the greater use of the On-Pack Recycling Label in store."

Get more information at <http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/diy-sector-exceeds-landfill-and-packaging-targets>.

Brazilian Government Asks Citizens For Ideas On Solid Waste Policy Implementation

On Monday, the Brazilian federal government announced that through September 10, citizens could present their ideas and opinions on implementation of the National Policy on Solid Waste of 2010 by participating in a "virtual conference" online. The public consultation is part of the 4th National Conference on Environment.

"This is an opportunity for those people who have not yet contributed their ideas for improving solid waste management in the country," said Geraldo Vitor de Abreu, Director of Department of Citizenship and Social Responsibility within the Ministry of Environment.

In addition to submitting ideas and comments through Brazil's e-Democracia web portal, the public can also present ideas and comments at 139 public meetings scheduled across the country.

Get more information at <http://www.brasil.gov.br/noticias/arquivos/2013/08/26/cidadao-pode-dar-sugestoes-em-conferencia-virtual-sobre-residuos-solidos>.

Hong Kong Government's Recycling Industry Steering Committee Holds Its First Meeting

According to a Government of Hong Kong announcement, the Steering Committee to Promote the Sustainable Development of the Recycling Industry met for the first time last week. The Steering Committee, which is composed of representatives from seven government agencies, was recently created to "*boost waste reduction at source and promote the development of the recycling industry.*"

The Government said it will soon be seeking public input on a number of recycling-related issues. Among them are finding new, proactive ways to facilitate the recycling industry's development in Hong Kong, improving and expanding collection facilities, promoting technological research and workforce training and possibly creating a recycling fund.

The Government of Hong Kong announcement is posted at http://www.news.gov.hk/en/categories/environment/html/2013/08/20130823_184415.shtml.

Business Initiatives

American Chemistry Council Revamps BPA Website

Probably expected increased media attention to BPA as both the US FDA and the European Food Safety Authority are finalizing updated positions on the controversial chemical, the American Chemistry Council said this week it has "*revamped*" its dedicated BPA website at www.factsaboutbpa.org.

According to the ACC, the website is designed to "*provide the public with easy access to the latest science-based news, research and safety and health information on bisphenol A (BPA).*"

Among the new features on the website is "*an interactive world map where journalists, researchers and policy makers can easily find the latest BPA health and safety assessments from government bodies and scientists around the world.*" Another new feature is a video that "*illustrates what happens inside the human body when typical and trace amounts of BPA are consumed*" and "*how BPA in food packaging helps to extend a product's shelf life and protects food from contamination and spoilage.*"

The ACC website revamp announcement is posted at <http://www.americanchemistry.com/Media/PressReleasesTranscripts/ACC-news-releases/ACC-Relaunches-Facts-About-BPA-Website.html>.

Canadian Plastics Industry Association Sponsors Marine Litter Pilot Projects

Today, the Canadian Plastics Industry Association (CPIA) announced it is sponsoring two pilot projects that address the problem of marine litter.

One of the projects tests a scheme to collect plastic marine litter and convert it to fuel. The other project is designed to "*recycle plastic debris into commercial product lines.*"

"*The Canadian plastics industry has a dozen projects complete or in progress to further recycling and recovery opportunities to reduce plastics entering the marine environment,*" said CPIA President Cathy Cirko.

Read the CPIA announcement at

http://www.plastics.ca/files/file.php?fileid=newsBYJtiFGIfa&filename=file_NR_UpGyres_PlasticShore.pdf.

The Green Perspective

Natural Resources Defense Council Releases Report On Cost Of Trash In Californian Waters

Today, the US-based Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) released a 56-page report titled, "*Waste In Our Water: The Annual Cost To California Communities of Reducing Litter That Pollutes Our Waterways.*" The report, which was prepared by Kier Associates, claims that cost to be about 500 million dollars annually.

The report also estimated costs for ten coastal communities or municipalities. At the top of the list was Long Beach in Los Angeles County, which spent nearly \$13 million to clean up waste and debris from benches and waterways. Redondo Beach and Merced each spent about 2.3 million, and Fountain Valley spend 1.2 million.

The report included costs for the following six activities: waterway and beach cleanup, street sweeping, installation of stormwater capture devices, storm drain cleaning and maintenance, manual cleanup of litter and public education activities.

The introduction of the report concludes, "*Such costs, in the view of the project team, make a compelling argument for accelerating the implementation of measures to reduce litter flows that contribute to aquatic debris.*"

Download the NRDC report at http://docs.nrdc.org/oceans/oce_13082701.asp

Danish Eco Council Publishes e-Book On EU Politics, Chemical Regulations And The Environment

The Danish Eco Council announced last week the release of a new 84-page e-book that addresses the confluence of politics and chemical regulations in the European Union. Among the topics addressed in "*Chemicals in politics and everyday life*" are REACH, endocrine disrupting chemicals, the cocktail effect of multiple chemicals acting together and the expanding use of nanomaterials.

"My intention with this e-book is to provide students with a scientific understanding of how chemicals work and how they affect health and the environment," said Lone Mikkelsen, a Danish Eco Council chemistry expert. "But this knowledge is represented in relation to the politics of regulation in the area and leads to an understanding of the extent to which we and the environment are exposed to harmful chemicals in everyday life, and what consequences exposure can have. There has long lacked a thorough review which includes all three dimensions."

Download a copy of the new e-book at

<http://www.ecocouncil.dk/en/udgivelser/artikler/kemikalier/2202-ny-e-bog-om-kemikalier-i-politik-og-hverdag>.

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