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Plus environmental news briefs from the *Bulletin*.

European Commission Unveils Strategy to Make Plastic Waste Circular

by Elgin Norwood

Measures proposed to improve economics of recycling, reduce waste and litter, and drive investment and innovation towards circular solutions.

On January 16, the European Commission unveiled an EU-wide strategy to boost plastics recycling and reduce waste and litter. The strategy includes 39 actions that the EU plans to take and 23 other actions recommended to industry and national governments (Member States).

The Commission also launched a public consultation on the circular plastics strategy.

According to a European Commission announcement, the European Union generates 25 million tons of plastic waste annually of which less than 30% is recycled. Discarded plastic packaging and items comprise 85% of beach litter.

The 39 actions that the European Commission recommends taking are organized into the following categories:

- improving product design
- boosting recycled content
- separating waste plastics collection

- reducing single-use plastics
- reducing sea-based sources of marine litter
- monitoring marine litter more effectively
- reducing microplastics pollution
- encouraging use of compostable and biodegradable plastic
- promoting investment and innovation in the plastics value chain
- engaging in multilateral initiatives on plastic
- engaging in bilateral cooperation with non-EU countries
- supporting international trade in waste/recyclable plastic

Actions to improve plastic product design include improving the traceability of chemicals and addressing the issue of legacy substances in recycled streams, considering the addition of requirements to the Eco-Design Directive to support the recyclability of plastics, and ensuring that by 2030 all plastics packaging placed on the EU market can be reused or recycled in a cost-effective manner.

Actions to boost recycled content include launching an “*EU-wide pledging campaign targeting industry and public authorities*,” finalizing pending authorization procedures for plastics recycling processes, better characterization of contaminants and introduction of a monitoring system, developing quality standards for sorted plastics waste and recycled plastics, and further incentivizing the use of recycled plastics in green procurement including by developing adequate verification means.

In regard to compostable and biodegradable plastics, the strategy calls for developing harmonized rules on defining and labelling compostable and biodegradable plastics, conducting a lifecycle assessment to identify conditions where the use of compostable and biodegradable plastics is beneficial, and criteria for such applications, and launching a process to restrict the use of oxo-plastics. (See the separate report in this issue of *Recycling Laws International*.)

A link to the complete set of actions in the strategy is below.

According to the European Commission announcement, the next steps in the rollout of the strategy are:

- release of a proposal addressing single-use plastic to be released later this year
- approval by the European Parliament and Council of Ministers of a just released draft EU directive on port reception facilities that should stop littering at sea
- drafting of amendments to the EU Directive on Packaging and Packaging Waste and a guidance on plastic waste collection and sorting to commence in 2019

The aforementioned public consultation closes on February 12.

Recycling Laws International will report on developments.

Download the European Union list of plastics strategy actions at https://ec.europa.eu/info/consultations/reducing-marine-litter-action-single-use-plastics-and-fishing-gear_en



European Chemicals Agency Is Drafting Restrictions on Oxo-Plastics and Microplastics Use

by Bruce Popka

Public consultations are expected to begin this spring.

The European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) announced on January 17 that it has started to draft “*restriction proposals for oxo-plastics and for intentionally added microplastic particles to consumer or professional use products of any kind.*”

Microplastics

The current European Union policy relies on only “*voluntary commitments by the cosmetics industry*” to address the problem of microplastic beads in the environment, particularly, the marine environment. However, some EU Member States - among them are France, Sweden and the United Kingdom - already have adopted national regulations restricting the use of microplastic beads in cosmetics and personal care products. ECHA’s regulations will make restrictions uniform for all EU Member States and possibly extend the restrictions beyond cosmetics and personal care products.

Oxo-plastics

Oxo-plastics, according to ECHA, “*can break down into very small particles, potentially contributing to environmental contamination by microplastics.*” They are used in some plastic carryout bags, agricultural films and other plastic products.

A provision in Directive (EU) 2015/720 (addressing lightweight plastic bag consumption) directed the European Commission to “*examine the impact of the use of oxo-degradable plastic carrier bags on the environment and present a report to the European Parliament and the Council, including, if appropriate, a set of measures to limit their consumption or to reduce any harmful impacts.*” The Commission now has initiated action to do that.

Some EU Member States, such as Spain, already have banned the use of oxo-plastic carryout bags.

ECHA said public consultations on the draft restrictions will be launched in spring 2018. ***Recycling Laws International*** will report on developments.

The ECHA announcement is available for review at <https://echa.europa.eu/-/echa-to-consider-restrictions-on-the-use-of-oxo-plastics-and-microplasti-1>



Packaging and Tires Are First Product Categories Targeted under Chilean EPR Law

by Elgin Norwood

Stakeholder committees are being formed to help develop draft regulations.

On January 18, the Chilean Ministry of Environment announced that packaging and vehicle tires will be the first two product categories (priority products) regulated under the nation's recently enacted extended producer responsibility law.

A resolution was published in the Diario Oficial on January 5 launched the consultative process. The URL for where the resolution is published is https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=11&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwiO4qu33fPYAhWRzVMKHQTtDH84ChAWCCYwAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.chilealimentos.com%2Fwordpress%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2F2018%2F01%2FResoluci%25C3%25B3n-que-da-inicio-al-procedimiento-de-elaboraci%25C3%25B3n-DS-de-metas.pdf&usq=AOvVaw2D_IIV8l6d4_tEFdP6hV55

Two “*expanded collective committees*” are being formed (one for each priority product) to participate in the development of draft regulations. Individuals can apply to join a committee by submitting an application to the Ministry of Environment by February 18.

The URL for submitting an application is <http://rechile.mma.gob.cl/convocatoria-a-integrar-el-comite-operativo-ampliado-de-neumaticos-y-envases-y-embalajes/>

Recycling Laws International will report on the EPR regulations once they are drafted.

Review the Chilean Ministry of Environment announcement at <http://portal.mma.gob.cl/ministerio-del-medio-ambiente-inicia-proceso-para-fijar-metas-de-reciclaje/>

Review the Chilean Law of Promotion to the Recycling and Extended Responsibility of the Producer at <https://www.leychile.cl/Navegar?idNorma=1090894>

Chilean Diputado Introduces Motion to Restrict Conventional Plastic Packaging

by Silvia de Gutierrez

The proposed bill would promote biodegradable and compostable plastics as replacements.

Chilean Diputado Miguel Angel Alvarado Ramirez introduced a motion in the Camara de Diputados (House of Representatives) on January 18 for a law to regulate plastic packaging and encourage greater use of bioplastics. (In Chile, a motion is a legislative document prepared prior to the introduction of a bill.)

Most of the 8-page motion provides statistical and anecdotal arguments for restricting traditional plastic packaging, most addressing plastic pollution's effects on wildlife and the environment. The final two pages contain the provisions for a proposed law.

Article 1 in Camara Motion No. 1268 of 17 January 2018 calls for essentially prohibiting the use of "*conventional non-biodegradable or non-compostable polyethylene and polypropylene containers*" in stores and supermarkets and in general commerce.

Article 2 calls for replacing such conventional plastics in packaging with biodegradable and compostable alternatives, and Article 3 would direct plastic producers and distributors to produce biodegradable and compostable substitutes.

Article 4 of the motion defines "*compostable container*" and "*biodegradable container*," stating they decompose into carbon dioxide, water and humus at a rate similar to other organic materials, and they leave no "*toxic residue*."

"*Bioplastics*" would be required to be certified and labeled so consumers could identify them, according to Article 5 of the motion. Article 6, specifies the certification requirements:

- being 90% degraded by six months after the start of the composting process
- breaking down into fragments less than 2 millimeters in diameter once 90% degraded
- having only low levels of heavy metals
- producing "*good compost quality*"

Bioplastic packaging would need to display a bioplastic label. Packaging that does not display the bioplastic label would be required to provide a message about the environmental consequences of its use, according to Article 7 of the motion.

The law would take effect one year after it is agreed to by Congress. Further action resulting from the motion introduced by Diputado Ramirez will be reported in [*Recycling Laws International*](#).

To review Chilean Camara Motion No. 1268 of 17 January 2018, go to https://www.camara.cl/pley/pley_detalle.aspx?prmID=12094&prmBL=711578-12



Singapore NEA Is Planning an Initial Consultation for an E-Waste Management System

by Elgin Norwood

The current national WEEE recycling program is voluntary, and the volume of e-waste generated is expected to grow.

The Singapore National Environment Agency said on January 19 that it is studying best practices for managing e-waste in other countries and plans to launch an initial public consultation next month to seek the public's view on managing e-waste in Singapore. The NEA says Singapore generates about 60,000 tons of e-waste annually, and the per capita annual disposal is about 11 kilograms.

The National Voluntary Partnership for E-Waste Recycling currently is the only program launched by the government help manage Philippine e-waste.

Recycling Laws International will report on the public consultation once it launches.

Get more information at

<http://www.nea.gov.sg/corporate-functions/newsroom/news-releases/stakeholders-sharing-responsibility-is-key-to-building-a-sustainable-e-waste-management-system-nea-study>



Zero Food Waste Act Proposed in Philippine House of Representatives

by Silvia de Gutierrez

The Act mandates activities to increase edible food donations and the recycling/composting of inedible food.

On January 15, Representative Luis Raymund Villafuerte Jr. introduced legislation in the Philippine Congress to create the Zero Food Waste Act. The legislation is House Bill 6789.

The bill requires food-related businesses (including food manufacturers, supermarkets, restaurants, cafeterias and hotels) to:

- submit initial reports to the Department of Social Welfare and Development and the Department of Environmental and Natural Resources on the amounts of edible and inedible foods waste donated, disposed and composted
- contract with food banks to redistribute edible food

- contact with waste management and recycling companies to recycle inedible food waste into compost or fertilizer
- submit annual reports to Department of Social Welfare and Development and the Department of Environmental and Natural Resources on their food waste reduction efforts
- meet food waste targets to be set by the Department of Environmental and Natural Resources

The food-related business would pay the cost of transporting edible and inedible food wastes as prescribed.

Under the Act, the Department of Social Welfare and Development would:

- provide guidelines and standards for collecting, storing and distributing edible food to food banks
- ensure that food-related business have contracted with food banks to accept food donations
- promote relationships between food banks and local government units (LGUs) to facilitate the distribution of edible donated food
- provide training to “the food insecure” to help manage food banks
- LGUs also would have responsibilities under the Zero Food Waste Act. They include reporting to DENR on inedible food waste (by ton) that is converted to compost or fertilizer, initiating food waste segregation, contracting with waste management and recycling companies to convert inedible food waste into compost and fertilizer, and meeting food waste recycling and composting targets to be set by the Department of Environmental and Natural Resources

The Philippine National Nutrition Council would adopt the rules and regulations necessary to carry out the Act.

The bill was assigned to the Committee on Food Security.

To review Philippine House Bill 6789, go to http://www.congress.gov.ph/legisdocs/basic_17/HB06789.pdf

In this week’s issue of the *Bulletin*:

Statistics and Trends:

- E-Waste Collection in Wisconsin Fell by More than One Million Pounds in 2016/2017
- New York DEC Awards \$3.5 Million in Grants to Divert Food Waste from Landfills
- West Virginia DEP Awards \$1.3 Million in Recycling Grants
- Environment Brussels Calls for Projects to Fight Food Waste

- RECYC-QUEBEC Publishes Study on Environmental/Economic Effects of Using Shopping Bags
- Technology Helps Drive New South Wales Container Deposit Scheme to Success

Business Initiatives:

- French Packaging Compliance Scheme Offers Nine Recommendations for Developing a Circular Economy
- Coca-Cola Pledges to Recycle All of Its Bottles by 2030
- McDonalds Pledges to Phase Out Use of Polystyrene Foam Food Packaging
- Australian Packaging Covenant Says Packaging Recycling Up 4.8% in 2015/2016

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