

The Association of Plastic Recyclers 2018 Annual Report

Happy New Year!

Let's be clear. **Any sustainability goals related to plastic packaging must have recycling as its core component.** In 2018 the war on plastics found footing with the mainstream media, assisted by the visually troubling optics of marine debris issues. This coverage, coupled with export market fluctuations initiated by China, led to an increasingly popular narrative questioning the role of recycling as a solution.



As The Voice of Plastics Recycling®, the APR Board of Directors authorized investment in a major media program to provide factual information and educational efforts focused on editorial boards, environmental reporters, trade press, and others. See the highlights below for more detail.

As the only trade association whose sole mission is to protect and expand the plastics recycling industry, we reinforced and expanded our commitment to creating more supply of material available for processing, enhancing the quality of the material by reducing contamination, and most urgently, expanding end market demand for recycled resin.

APR firmly believes that **end market demand is the key to sustaining the entire recycling chain,** for all materials. While materials flow one way through the system, the funding resource of the system flows the opposite direction. End market demand ultimately monetizes the entire system. For APR, increasing demand is a core activity. The exponential growth in the APR Recycling Demand Champions Campaign continued to expand demand markets for recycled resins.

Additional key highlights of our efforts last year include:

- The publication of **the most comprehensive Life Cycle Inventory Analysis for PET, HDPE and PP ever conducted,** which demonstrated more than 80% energy savings using recycled resin vs. virgin, a key marketing tool for our industry.
- Continuous improvement of the APR testing protocols, The APR Design® Guide for Plastics Recyclability, and The APR Design® Guide Training Program, which continue to serve as **the industry standard increasingly accepted by organizations and brands around the globe.**
- Development of the **Sortation Potential Protocols,** the four-part test which will provide immediate feedback to determine if a package or container will sort to the correct stream, a first of its kind that will have a major impact on bale contamination for all materials.

- Working with **our association partners in Europe, Australia, Latin America, South Africa** and others to incorporate the APR Design® Guide as part of their training programs.
- Once again publishing the Annual PET, HDPE and ALL BOTTLE Recycling Rate Reports with our partners.
- Working to protect our industry with our advocacy efforts across the country and **working with Members of Congress to expand investment in recycling infrastructure**, and to consider set-a-side procurement programs for products containing recycled content.

Of course, these are only a glimpse of how APR works each and every day to protect and grow our industry.

At APR, we believe that sustainability begins with recycling. APR looks forward to partnering with consumer facing companies with pronounced aggressive sustainability goals to provide a pathway toward their success.

Remember, it's not single use if it is recycled.

On behalf of APR, thank you for your commitment and continued support of the plastics recycling industry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Alexander". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Steve Alexander
President and CEO
Steve@plasticsrecycling.org

Working to Grow Plastics Recycling - 2018 in Review

Communications

Pro-Recycling Strategic Communications Plan

APR is partnering with Bracewell's Policy Resolution Group, a Washington DC based firm that provides government relations, strategic communications and legal representation services, to counteract negative media through a steady stream of positive and educational news about plastics recycling. Resources that include key messages and talking points, media and social media toolkits, graphics, videos, and opinion editorials, are under development.



APR's Top 2018 News Stories:

- The 2018 APR Plastics Recycling Showcase Innovations
- The Global Definition of Plastics Recyclability
- The 2017 PET Bottle Recycling Rate Report
- The APR Recycling Demand Champions Campaign 2018 Report
- APR's Endorsement of The New Plastics Economy Global Commitment

Engagement with APR's social media saw a 28% increase in Facebook followers and growth to 1,100 Twitter followers. In addition to highlighting APR news and other relevant topics, APR launched a multi-platform campaign to bolster awareness of plastics recycling in the weeks leading up to America Recycles Day that reached nearly 6,000 people and resulted in tremendous traffic to APR's social media.

Public Affairs / Capitol Hill Activity focused on including recycling in the Infrastructure Bill and government procurement set aside programs for items made with recycled plastics.

APR Web Seminars experienced continued growth in 2018. All recordings and presentation slides are available on the APR website. Topics included:

- EU and CA Packaging Regulations: What do They Mean for Plastics Recycling?
- APR Sorting Potential Protocols
- APR Recycling Demand Champion Campaign
- Sustainable Materials Management: A Compliment or a Barrier to Recycling?
- The APR Life Cycled Inventory Analysis for PET, HDPE, and PP
- Plastic Sorting Best Management Practices

PET & Olefin Technical

Global Outreach with Plastics Recyclers Europe, European PET Bottle Platform and the Ellen MacArthur Foundation's New Plastic Economy (NPE) enabled progress and cooperation on:

- A global definition of plastics recyclability for use with NPE that includes market demand.
- Films and flexible packaging recycling.
- Testing for recycle compatibility of PET packaging elements.



The Ellen MacArthur Foundation announced the New Plastics Economy Global Commitment in October of 2018.

The APR endorsed the Global Commitment calling for a Circular Economy for plastics. Those committed to this program support that plastic packaging is designed to be compatible with today's recycling processes, is recyclable in practice and at scale; and that packaging will contain recycled content. *The APR Design® Guide for Plastics Recyclability* is cited as an important resource for those companies engaged in the Global Commitment.

APR Test Methods & Protocols were expanded and improved with a significant update of the PET Testing Documents completed in 2018, and the publication of three new Sorting Potential Protocols for NIR Optical Sorting, Small Size Sortation, and Metals Detection.

The APR PET Problem Bottle Program was prioritized in 2018 with an initial focus on five PET packaging design features: PETG shrink sleeve labels, pressure sensitive film labels, replacing metal closures with plastics, encouraging the use of crystallizable PET for extrusion blow molded containers, and reduction in the amount of barrier materials used in PET packaging that impact recycling.

A Black Plastics Study was commissioned by APR and conducted by WEKA Plastics Recycling to develop information impacting the collection and recovery of black plastics in single stream MRF's:

1. Quantify the amount of black PP and HDPE in single stream collection today.
2. Identify how single stream MRF's are handling black plastics today and consider what might be done differently in the future.
3. Identify current and future sorting technologies that might be used for black plastics.
4. Identify any design features or practices that might be included in the APR Design® Guide to increase recovery of black plastics.

PP Closures on HDPE Bottles are being investigated by the Olefin Technical Committee to reduce the amount of PP used for closures in the HDPE container stream to result in more consistent properties of recycled HDPE and enable use in a wider number of applications.

EVOH Content in Rigid HDPE and PP is the focus of a working group formed in 2018 to determine how much EVOH can be in a PP or HDPE multi-layer package and not interfere with recycling.

The PET Reclaimer Working Group formed as a means of addressing and providing a technical resource for shared issues such as problem bottles and related communications.

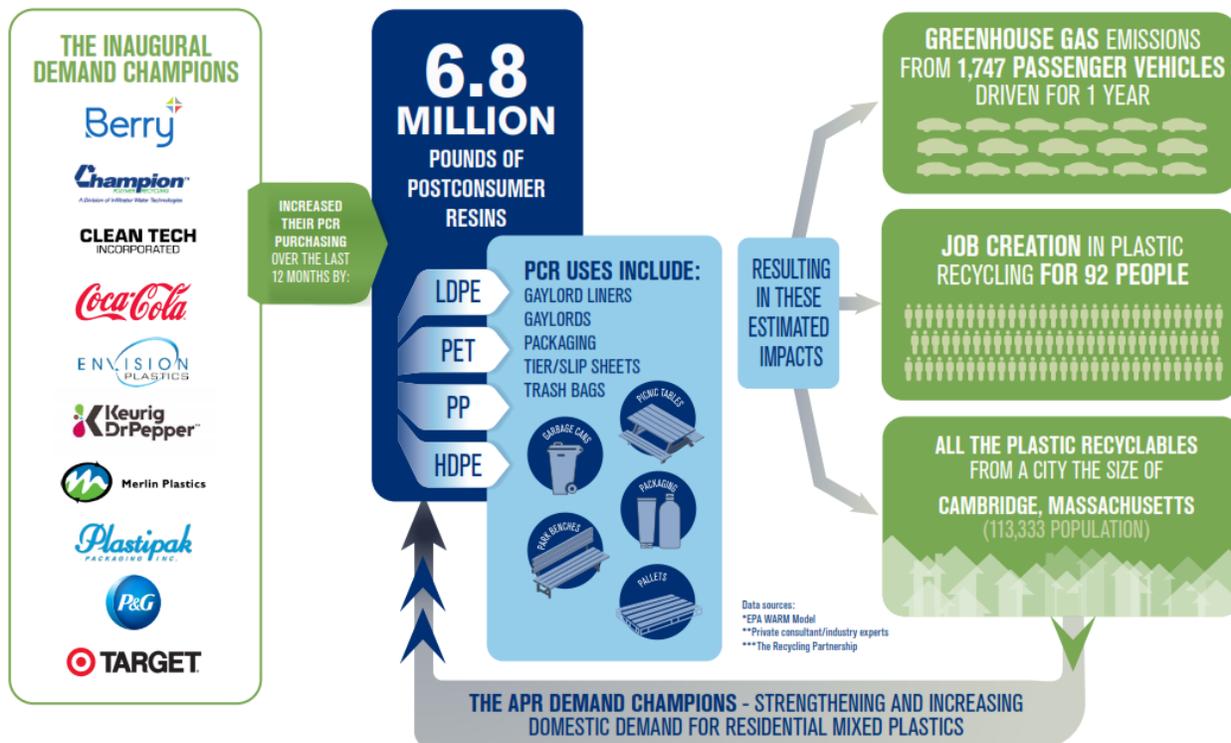
Olefins/Rigids Program

The APR Recycling Demand Champions Campaign plays a prominent role in expanding the market for recycled plastics, driving investment, and increasing supply. Champion companies commit to purchase new volume PCR in the coming year in 3 possible ways:

- Purchase “work in process” (WIP) durable goods for use in manufacturing facilities.
- Develop a new application for PCR.
- Increase PCR usage in a current application.

2018 APR RECYCLING DEMAND CHAMPIONS YEAR END REPORT

Consistent, reliable demand is critical for recycling to be mature, vibrant and sustainable



The PCR Certification Subcommittee, comprised of plastic reclaimers and brand name companies, continued its important work in investigating and working towards a system which results in industry definition and verification of PCR.

The APR Plastic Sorting Best Management Practices Guide was published in 2018 to standardize how data is collected in studies that seek to identify the composition of plastics in the waste and recycling stream.

The State Market Development Program began in 2018 with a pilot project in the state of Nebraska. The goals of the project include:

- Assess postconsumer resin (PCR) usage, or potential usage, in Nebraska plastic manufacturing.
- Use data gathered to further promote and educate re: PCR usage in the state.
- Develop a market development model program to promote and educate re: PCR usage in other states.

Work conducted in the Fall of 2018 included an APR-sponsored survey of Nebraska plastic manufacturers that was designed to elicit data regarding postconsumer resin use and potential barriers to use. The survey results and next steps will be detailed in a final report to be completed in early 2019, with next steps for both Nebraska and the larger state model to be further developed in the coming year.

Film Reclamation

The APR PE Film Innovation Benchmark Test Protocol was published in early 2018, and is under continuous improvement review to address feedback from test users or those wishing to better understand the test. Based on this review, the Committee decided to pursue development of a Critical Guidance Protocol for PE Films. The Committee collaborated with Plastics Recycling Europe on joint development of a film benchmark test for Europe.

APR provided key technical arguments to CalRecycle on CA SB 270, which would have prevented film material processed back into film or bags through a dry wash system from being sold in the state.

APR participated in film sort projects with the Sustainable Packaging Coalition and the Material Recovery for the Future pilot project, which hopes to successfully integrate flexible film recovery in household curbside recycling. In addition, we continue our work with the End Markets Workgroup to advise on end market applications for the potentially recovered flexible packaging.

A “Beyond Bottles” Toolkit on PE film recycling was finalized for the APR website.

Research on Meal Kit Packaging was conducted, resulting in a Resource Recycling magazine article and presentation at the SPC Impact conference in April, 2018.



Foundation for Plastic Recycling (FPR)

The Foundation was established by APR and launched in 2018. Its mission is to drive sustainability solutions for plastics recycling to support the Circular Economy. It is one of the only organizations whose sole mission is enhancing and expanding plastics recycling efforts to bolster economic and environmental benefits. Led by Executive Director, Lisa Lopinsky, and a Board of Directors, the Foundation identified initial areas of focus, established a fundraising strategy and launched marketing efforts.



**FOUNDATION FOR
PLASTIC RECYCLING**
Your Connection to the Circular Economy

APR Staff

- Steve Alexander, **President**
- Kara Pochiro, **VP of Communications & Public Affairs**
- John Standish, **Technical Director**
- Kate Eagles, **Assistant Technical Director**
- Dave Cornell, **Technical Consultant**
- Liz Bedard, **Rigids Program Director**
- Sandi Childs, **Film and Flexible Program Director**
- Ali Briggs-Ungerer, **Member Services Director**
- *Lisa Lopinsky, Executive Director for the Foundation for Plastic Recycling (FPR)*

APR Board of Directors

- **CHAIR:** Jaime Camara, PETStar
- **VICE CHAIR:** Nicole Janssen, Denton Plastics
- **TREASURER:** Bill O Grady, Talco Plastics
- Dawn Gaines, Mohawk Industries
- Greg Janson, QRS Inc.
- Tony Moucachen, Merlin Plastics
- Roxanne Spiekerman, Roplast Industries, Inc.
- Jon Stephens, Avangard Innovative
- Eric Targgart, Custom Polymers, Inc
- Mike Westerfield, Dart Container Corp.
- Julie Zaniewski, Unilever