
EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY WEBINAR: EXPLORING SOLUTIONS FOR BATTERIES

MONDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2011 10:00 AM -12:00 PM PST

WEBINAR PARTICIPANTS: 45

This document is intended as a brief overview of the EPR webinar on batteries. For further details, please refer to [presentation links](#).

Welcome

Heidi Sanborn, Executive Director of the California Product Stewardship Council, welcomed webinar attendees. The purpose of the webinar is to explore sustainable solutions to the challenges of managing household batteries using a product stewardship model. The webinar will provide information on the current legislation and programs for household batteries in California, findings from pilot projects to collect all household batteries in Del Norte County and in the San Gabriel Valley in Los Angeles, and discuss a range of possible solutions and opportunities in such areas as public policy, technology, and partnerships.

Results from Battery Laws and Pilot Projects in California

Heidi Sanborn, Executive Director of CPSC – Ms. Sanborn shared findings of the Del Norte and Tuolumne pilot projects and consumer and business focus groups in San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments region of Los Angeles County:

- Waste haulers such as Republic Services, Inc. and Recology support EPR because they now view themselves as waste materials managers, and zero waste cannot be reached with products designed for disposal
- Del Norte County pilot project allowed co-collection of rechargeables and alkalines in Call2Recycle boxes. The pilot project yielded impressive results – 4,740 lbs. collected in pilot year which was a 3,000% increase over the baseline.
- Tuolumne County pilot project – effort was much too costly for local government to continue without a grant or sustainable funding source and because the pilot relied on the retailers paying, only two hardware stores participated and only one of them continued the program after the grant period and that store went out of business a year later.

Focus group findings:

- Consumers and retailers in San Gabriel Valley focus groups were unaware of disposal ban (56% admit to throwing batteries in trash).
- Consumers suggested a financial incentive for them to return batteries
- Retailers refused to pay for disposal cost of take-back program. Retailers say producers should be responsible. Retailers and consumers think:
 - Taxpayers should not pay

- Producers should be responsible
- Disposal cost should be added to purchase price
- Retailers and consumers want producers to make less toxic products

Battery Recycling: Canadian Programs and What's on the Horizon in the U.S.

Carl Smith, Call2Recycle – Presented overview of the main issues faced by municipalities, stewards and collection programs:

- Law in British Columbia is very straightforward, while Ontario has a highly regulated approach, mainly collecting primary batteries.
- British Columbia passed regulation seeking launch of all-battery program throughout the province by July 1, 2010 – collection rates skyrocketed.
- Key Lessons:
 - Maximizing battery collection requires: 1) Harmonize amongst jurisdictions and 2) an all-battery collection program (don't require consumers to sort alkaline from rechargeable)
 - Successful programs needs very explicit definitions—clarify who is the responsible party or obligated steward (this can change dramatically from province to province)
 - Municipalities must maintain their role in public education using producers message
 - Public policy should enable and not regulate programs
 - Stewards design and run much more effective and efficient programs than provincial (state) agencies
 - Changing consumer behavior is not trivial! It is a difficult task. Even the most long standing battery EPR programs in the world of 17 years are not beyond 60% recycling.

Q.- What is the recycling rate that is reasonable?

A. Recycling rate is relative; you can have a much higher collection rate for rechargeable batteries than primary batteries. The recycling goal in British Columbia is 75% but they look to industry to establish what is a reasonable ramping up to that rate. Quebec started at 25% ramping up 5% a year to 65% which we do not think is reasonable based on other programs. France has one of the highest collection rates of 25% after seven years.

Q. Do you know of any program that provides a financial incentive or rebate for collecting batteries?

A. No, I haven't seen any examples of these financial incentives.

California Legislation on Battery Recycling

Michael Jarred, Senator Ellen Corbett's Office – Provided an overview of Senator Corbett's work on battery EPR legislation:

- Senator Corbett's battery EPR bill received broad support from local government, the environmental community, haulers and recyclers, but was opposed by companies such as HP, and associations such as Tech America.
- SB 515 will require battery manufacturers to design, fund and operate a stewardship program to properly manage batteries in order to sell their products in California.

- SB 515 will also require battery manufacturers to increase collection rates each year and report data to the Department of Resources, Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) who will oversee the implementation of each manufacturer's stewardship plan.
- Battery Stewardship will alleviate local government costs to manage toxic battery waste, create green jobs in recycling and collection of batteries, and ensure that battery waste is properly managed.

Q. Who are the companies that opposed the bill?

A. Hewlett Packard was the strongest corporate opponent and wanted an exemption for all batteries they sell in products. Tech America was the primary association in opposition.

Call2Recycle Green Vantage Program

Sean Burchill, Call2Recycle Regional Representative – Presented overview of Call2Recycle's Green Vantage Program:

- Call2Recycle (founded in 1994) is the only free rechargeable battery collection program in North America.
- Call2Recycle's aim is to maximize battery collection and recovery from municipalities in the most efficient, compliant, and cost-effective manner possible.
- Consumers have option of participating in free box program or postage-paid bulk program. Call2Recycle only accepts consumer rechargeable batteries in the U.S.
- In British Columbia, Canada, all batteries are collected.
- Battery disposal for municipalities can be expensive and complicated. Call2Recycle focus is local. Policy and impetus for momentum must come from municipalities.
- Green Vantage Program:
 - New program launched to help municipalities recycle rechargeable batteries
 - Program offsets operating costs associated with battery sorting
- Visit Call2Recycle [website](#) to find legislation, how batteries are recycled and why batteries need to be recycled.

Q. Recyclable batteries represent a miniscule portion of the household batteries accepted at our HHW drop-off. What prevents Call2Recycle from handling all batteries in the U.S.?

A. The Call2Recycle program is funded by producers of rechargeable batteries. Presently, there is no funding mechanism in place to enable Call2Recycle to collect primary batteries in the US.

Q. Please provide an example of operational offset cost

A. Call2Recycle has always covered shipping costs for battery take-back, but GreenVantage offsets the cost of sorting rechargeable from alkalines. Contact [Sean Burchill](#) at sburchill@call2recycle.org regarding cost savings inquiries for specific municipalities.

National Battery Stewardship Program

Erin Billman, Blu Sky Consulting – Provided an overview of Blu Sky's work with large companies and industries working with alkaline battery producers on a National Battery Stewardship Program:

- Program is funded by industry's \$3.7million commitment and has a website for new information and wants to be transparent www.Recyclebattery.org
- Five companies participating in program: Energizer, Duracell, Ray-o-Vac, Kodak and Panasonic
- U.S. battery industry has come together to create a nationwide system that maximizes reuse of spent battery materials with a goal of zero waste.
- Foundations of the program:
 - Life Cycle assessment
 - Stakeholder engagement
 - Six guiding tenets for a voluntary program (net environmental benefit vs. landfilling, industry led, shared responsibility, non-fragmented (not tailored to specific locales) phased implementation, non-legislated)

Q. Marc Boolish with Energizer stated at the CPSC Battery Workshop at the EPA offices last May that the national program phased in roll-out would start in California. Can you confirm that is still the case?

A. The industry is very eager to work in California which is one reason why two of the foundational test projects are in California in Santa Clara and in San Luis Obispo. I know that California is high on the list.

Q. Expand on how you offset municipal costs

A. The current program is paying local governments participating in the foundation testing for processing

Q. California has no battery recycling facilities and has to ship batteries to British Columbia or Pennsylvania for recycling which adds GHG impacts. To improve environmental outcomes, is the industry looking at developing recycling facilities in California and creating jobs in recycling?

A. Absolutely, one of the key tenets of the program is that it be net environmentally positive. The question is what technology can get us to net environmentally positive? What is the cost and volume associated with that? We are looking at all those things.

Q. Are you reaching out to other groups for participation in the program?

A. Yes, we conduct outreach to other producers, retailers and associations to invite them into the partnership. There is an interest in expanding participation for sustainable funding.

[Santa Clara County Foundation Program](#)

Rob D'Arcy, Santa Clara County Hazardous Materials Program Manager – Provided an overview of the Santa Clara County battery collection project and data collection:

- Santa Clara County has a rather evolved battery collection program (over 140 countywide collection points). Extensive retail collection system lends itself to level of convenience for consumers.
- Santa Clara County is large and tracks its own generation of spent batteries.
- Sorting battery types is complicated. Santa Clara County keeps data segregated so it is clear what kind of batteries are coming in and where they are coming from by:
 - battery type
 - collection location

- type of collection facility
- by generator, by weight
- Environmental and economic impacts of battery collection and recycling are found in range of data capture:
 - GIS mapping
 - purpose of trip
 - retail drop-off
- The Foundation program will conduct further data capture through thorough battery sorting by chemistry, battery container type for collection and transporting, and energy use and greenhouse gas emissions.

Q. Will you research if collection of primary batteries drives more collection of rechargeable batteries and other HHW?

A. Yes, we will be collecting and watching this data. However, we won't be changing education and outreach to increase battery recycling. We want consumers to maximize their take-back trips to bring back other products as well (paint, mercury lamps, etc). As Santa Clara County moves toward more producer responsibility systems, Rob anticipates \$40,000 – \$50,000 dollar savings. There is a possibility of using that money to further education.

Batteries EPR Webinar Comments:

- While the industry seems to be indicating they want a purely voluntary program, it is unclear how they will be able to fund a program with high collection rates without leveling the playing field which requires legislation. In addition, legislation will be needed to protect from antitrust lawsuits. It is promising that the industry has a serious interest in leading the way which will likely result in national harmonization and work to their benefit. The public was clear from the California pilots and focus groups that they want battery stewardship, they want to recycle, but it must be convenient!
- PerfPower (www.irecycled.com) is the only company we are aware of that takes back and recycles alkaline batteries.
- CalRecycle is in the process of conducting a GHG study on four products, one is batteries and the data should be available late spring of 2012 which will provide more information on the benefits of recycling batteries.

Workshop Wrap-up and Conclusion

The organizations will continue to share information and work together to support a national roll-out of an alkaline battery stewardship program in 2013 and continue to work with Call2Recycle to maximize their existing program for rechargeable batteries.

Comments on Webinar:

“Thanks for another great webinar this morning.” - Leslie Robinson, Santa Barbara County Public Works Department

“I find the CPSC webinars very informative in bringing different stakeholder perspectives. You always do such a nice job on the webinars.” - Kathy Frevert, CalRecycle Staff