



## News Release

For Immediate Release

March 16, 2010

Contact: Jennifer Killinger (703) 741-5833

Email: [jennifer\\_killinger@americanchemistry.com](mailto:jennifer_killinger@americanchemistry.com)

### **NEW NATIONAL REPORT SHOWS PLASTIC BAG RECYCLING REACHES RECORD HIGH**

#### ***More Plastic Bags and Film Are Recycled than Ever Before; Growing Demand for Plastic Scrap***

ARLINGTON, VA (March 16, 2010) – The recycling of plastic bags and film reached a record high across the United States in 2008, continuing a growing national recycling trend.

An estimated 832,394,000 pounds of post-consumer film (including plastic bags and product wraps) were recovered in 2008, according to the latest National Post-Consumer Recycled Plastic Bags and Film Report. This represents a 28 percent increase in bag and film recycling since 2005. The boost in recycling was driven by greater consumer access to collection programs, primarily at large grocery and retail stores, as well as by new markets for these recycled materials.

The recycling report was conducted by Moore Recycling Associates, Inc. of Sonoma, California, based on information obtained from 79 domestic processors, end-users of film material and exporters. The recycling numbers reported likely understate actual bag and film recycling because export data is more difficult to obtain than data on domestic recycling, and in 2008 there was a shift toward export markets, according to the report. Data collection also was affected by the rapid spike in the number of collection programs as many stores launched new programs to recover post-consumer plastic bags and product wraps from their customers. There are now retail store collection programs in all 50 states.

“More Americans are recycling plastic bags and film than ever before, driven by a growing recognition that plastic is a valuable resource – too valuable to waste,” said Steve Russell, vice president of plastics for the American Chemistry Council. “Recovered plastic bags and wraps can be recycled into many useful products, including durable backyard decking, fencing, railings, shopping carts and, of course, new bags. Increased recycling of bags and film is good for the environment and good for the economy.”

“ACC will continue to work with grocers, retailers, communities and policymakers around the country to educate consumers and promote plastic recycling,” Russell said.

The increasing number of bag and film recycling programs are being led, in part, by plastic bag makers. Last year, the Progressive Bag Affiliates announced a landmark recycling goal of 40 percent recycled content in all plastic shopping bags made by these companies by 2015.



## NEW NATIONAL REPORT SHOWS PLASTIC BAG RECYCLING REACHES RECORD HIGH

March 16, 2010

Page 2

When fully implemented, the Full Circle Recycling Initiative will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 463 million pounds, conserve enough energy (mainly natural gas) to heat 200,000 homes, and reduce waste by 300 million pounds every year. To help reach that goal, in January, plastic bag maker Hilex Poly expanded its recycling operations in North Vernon, Indiana. In addition, California, New York, Rhode Island and Delaware along with some major jurisdictions including Chicago and Tuscon have added new laws recently requiring stores to take-back plastic bags and film for recycling.

According to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency data, about 13 percent of plastic bags and film are recycled annually<sup>1</sup>. While composite lumber continues to be the major market for recycled plastic bags and film, 2008 saw a notable increase in international demand for scrap plastic film.

The full report, “[2008 National Postconsumer Recycled Plastic Bag and Film Report.](#)” is available on [www.americanchemistry.com/plastics](http://www.americanchemistry.com/plastics). Follow Plastics Recycling News on Twitter: @Recycle\_Plastic, [http://twitter.com/recycle\\_plastic](http://twitter.com/recycle_plastic). More information on plastic bag recycling is available at [www.plasticbagrecycling.org](http://www.plasticbagrecycling.org).

###

<http://www.americanchemistry.com>

*The American Chemistry Council (ACC) represents the leading companies engaged in the business of chemistry. ACC members apply the science of chemistry to make innovative products and services that make people's lives better, healthier and safer. ACC is committed to improved environmental, health and safety performance through Responsible Care<sup>®</sup>, common sense advocacy designed to address major public policy issues, and health and environmental research and product testing. The business of chemistry is a \$689 billion enterprise and a key element of the nation's economy. It is one of the nation's largest exporters, accounting for ten cents out of every dollar in U.S. exports. Chemistry companies are among the largest investors in research and development. Safety and security have always been primary concerns of ACC members, and they have intensified their efforts, working closely with government agencies to improve security and to defend against any threat to the nation's critical infrastructure.*

---

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. *Municipal Waste in the United States: 2008 Facts and Figures (Table 7 Bags, Sacks and Wraps, HDPE, LDPE & LLDPE combined)*.

