



**The Association of Postconsumer
Plastic Recyclers**



News Release

For Immediate Release

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NEW STUDY CONFIRMS RECYCLING PLASTICS SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCES ENERGY USE AND GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

ARLINGTON, VA (April 28, 2010) – A new study confirms that recycling plastics, specifically PET and HDPE, results in significant savings in energy and greenhouse gas emissions. The study used life cycle inventory (LCI) methodology to quantify the energy requirements, solid wastes, and atmospheric and waterborne emissions for the processes required to collect postconsumer PET and HDPE packaging, sort and separate the material, and reprocess it into clean recycled resin.

Based on the LCI study results and data from U.S. EPA, the generation of cleaned recycled resin required 71 trillion Btu less than the amount of energy that would be required to produce the equivalent tonnage of virgin PET and HDPE resin. In other words, the amount of energy saved by recycling PET and HDPE containers including bottles in 2008 was the equivalent to the annual energy use of 750,000 U.S. homes. The corresponding savings in greenhouse gas emissions was 2.1 million tons of CO₂ equivalents, an amount comparable to taking 360,000 cars off the road.

(Calculations were based on the tonnage of postconsumer PET and HDPE recovered in 2008, and the energy required to collect, sort and domestically reprocess the tonnage of plastics containers (including bottles) recovered in 2008.)

The new study, “Final Report – Life Cycle Inventory of 100% Postconsumer HDPE and PET Recycled Resin from Postconsumer Containers and Packaging,” conducted by Franklin Associates Ltd., was jointly sponsored by the American Chemistry Council (ACC), the Association of Postconsumer Plastic Recyclers (APR), the National Association for PET Container Resources (NAPCOR) and the PET Resin Association (PETRA).

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RECYCLING PLASTICS SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCES ENERGY USE AND GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

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Life cycle inventory studies involve the compilation and quantification of inputs and outputs for a given product system throughout its life cycle. A typical LCI looks at the total energy use, greenhouse gas emissions and waste generated from raw materials extraction through manufacturing, transportation, use and disposal or recycling.

In 2007, the American Chemistry Council (ACC) sponsored a cradle-to-resin, or “cradle-to-gate” LCI for nine plastic resins and two polyurethane precursors that examined current data to quantify the total energy requirements, energy sources, atmospheric pollutants, waterborne pollutants, and solid waste resulting from the production of commonly used plastic materials in North America. The data collected for the 2007 study are publically available online through the [U.S. Lifecycle Database](http://www.americanchemistry.com/plastics/sec_content.asp?CID=1930&DID=7832), a project of the U.S. Department of Energy and its National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL). The 2007 report is available on ACC’s website (see: http://www.americanchemistry.com/plastics/sec_content.asp?CID=1930&DID=7832).

The new data from the 2010 recycled resin study will be added to the U.S. Lifecycle Database in the near future.

The full report, “Final Report – Life Cycle Inventory of 100% Postconsumer HDPE and PET Recycled Resin from Postconsumer Containers and Packaging,” is available online through the following links:

ACC: http://www.americanchemistry.com/s_plastics/sec_pfpg.asp?CID=1439&DID=10907

APR: <http://plasticsrecycling.org>

NAPCOR: <http://www.napcor.com/PET/sustainability.html>

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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®, 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.

www.americanchemistry.com/newsroom

The Association of Postconsumer Plastic Recyclers (APR) is the national trade association representing companies who acquire, reprocess and sell the output of more than 90 percent of the post-consumer plastic processing capacity in North America. Founded in 1992, its membership includes independent recycling companies of all sizes, processing numerous resins. APR strongly advocates the recycling of all post consumer plastic packaging.

www.plasticsrecycling.org

Founded in 1987, the National Association for PET Container Resources (NAPCOR) is the trade association for the PET plastic industry in the United States and Canada. NAPCOR is committed to being the credible voice and champion of the PET packaging industry; to facilitate solutions to PET recycling; and to communicate the benefits of PET as an environmentally sustainable package.

www.napcor.com



*The **PET Resin Association** (PETRA) is the trade association representing North American producers of PET resin, the polyester polymer used for packaging food and beverages, pharmaceuticals and a wide range of consumer products. PETRA is dedicated to promoting the benefits and value of PET resin, educating the public about the safety and uses of PET, providing accurate technical and scientific information about PET, and serving as the authoritative voice on issues impacting the industry.*

www.PETresin.org

