



# News Release

For Immediate Release

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## RIGID PLASTICS RECYCLING SURGES 27%; FILM RECYCLING GROWS 3%

NEW ORLEANS, LA (February 2, 2016) – The recycling of post-consumer rigid plastics surged 276 million pounds, or 27 percent, in 2014 to reach a new high of over 1.28 billion pounds for the year, according to a report released today at the [2016 Plastics Recycling Conference](#). The [2014 National Postconsumer Non-Bottle Rigid Plastic Recycling Report](#) also indicated that the reported volume of recycled rigid plastics—tracked separately from bottles or film—is now four times greater than the volume reported in just 2007.

“This is really exciting news,” said Steve Russell, vice president of plastics for the American Chemistry Council. “The combination of more advanced sorting technologies coupled with expanded consumer access is making a positive difference, and we look forward to seeing growth in rigid plastics recycling continue.”

[Moore Recycling Associates Inc.](#), which authored the report, attributes much of the strong gain to a rebound from the 2013 Green Fence effort in China, improved bale quality, and growing standardization of plastics bales—the unit by which post-use plastics are sold after collection.

The source of non-bottle rigid plastics collected with the biggest increase in 2014 was the [Pre-Picked Bale](#), which is generated from municipal programs and contains a mixture of products with bottles removed.

The rigid plastics category contains food containers, caps, lids, tubs, clamshells, cups and bulky items, such as buckets, carts and lawn furniture, along with used commercial scrap, such as crates, battery casings and drums. Typical end markets for these materials include automotive parts, crates, buckets, pipe, lawn and garden products, and thick-walled injection molded products.

As in prior years, polypropylene and high-density polyethylene comprised the two largest resins in this category, representing 38.3 percent and 34.1 percent, respectively, of total rigid plastics collected.

Approximately 64 percent of the 1.28 billion pounds of rigid plastics collected for recycling was processed in the United States or Canada, down slightly from 2013. The remainder was exported overseas, primarily to China.

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A separate report also released today found a minimum of 1.17 billion pounds of postconsumer plastic film was recycled in 2014, an increase of over 29 million pounds, or 3 percent, from the prior year. The [2014 National Postconsumer Plastic Bag and Film Recycling Report](#), also authored by Moore Recycling, marks the tenth consecutive year of the report, and a 79 percent increase in plastic film recycling since 2005. Based on data from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the recycling rate for film has grown from 6.6 percent to 17 percent of production during the same period.

The plastic film category includes commercial film packaging, a variety of consumer wraps and bags—all made primarily from thin, flexible sheets of polyethylene. Of the film collected for recycling in 2014, approximately 45 percent was processed in the United States or Canada with the remainder going primarily to China.

Primary uses for recycled plastic film include composite lumber, new film and sheet, agricultural products, crates, buckets, and pallets.

"We're pleased to see growth in these important areas of plastics recycling," said Patty Moore, president of Moore Recycling. "Continued expansion of a healthy sorting and processing infrastructure, and further development of end markets for recycled materials are essential for building on recent gains."

Information on tracking the recycling of plastic bottles is documented annually in a third series of reports. The [25th Annual National Post-Consumer Plastics Bottle Recycling Report](#) with results from 2014 was released in November 2015.

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