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First Ever SMM Policy Summit Draws More Than 130 Experts

NRC Begins Development of Consensus-Based National SMM Action Plan

Washington DC - The [National Recycling Coalition](#) (NRC) last week concluded the first-ever [Sustainable Materials Management \(SMM\) Summit](#) where sustainability leaders from across the country convened, determined to elevate the issues around discards management back to the forefront of national policy dialogue.

“The NRC is pleased that the Summit created this opportunity to discuss the vast challenges and opportunities that face the broad spectrum of sustainable material management professionals,” said Mark Lichtenstein, NRC President and CEO. “The Summit is intended to be the starting point for development of a National SMM Action Plan that will catapult recycling and other SMM issues to the next level of support and success at every level.”

Nearly 140 individuals representing government, businesses and organizations gathered at the University of Maryland, College Park, on May 12 and 13 – a broad and diverse set of stakeholders representing many of the greatest minds in recycling, reuse, discard prevention, product stewardship and other diversion methods. Key [presentations](#) were made by Mathy Stanislaus, Assistant Administrator for the Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response, and Judith Enck, Region 2 Administrator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, as well as:

- Ruth Abbe, Abbe & Associates and President, Zero Waste USA
- English Bird, Executive Director, New Mexico Recycling Coalition
- Kathryn Garcia, Commissioner, New York City Department of Sanitation
- Bob Gedert, Director, Austin Resource Recovery
- Nina Goodrich, Executive Director GreenBlue and Sustainable Packaging Coalition
- David Levine, Executive Director, American Sustainable Business Council
- Ryan McMullan, Manager of Environmental & Safety, Toyota
- Scott Mouw, North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources
- Joe Pickard, Chief Economist, Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries
- Al Rattie, Director of Market Development, U.S. Composting Council

There were dozens of creative concepts that emerged that will become the basis for the National SMM Action Plan. Some initial consensus ideas included the need for:

- *Making the business and jobs case for SMM;*
- *Model policies, programs and laws for communities to further SMM;*
- *Matching programs with performance metrics;*
- *Connecting SMM strategies and professionals with businesses and product designers, and local and state policy makers for improved consideration of full life cycle impacts and opportunities;*
- *Incorporation of SMM into climate action plans;*
- *Training and certifications of SMM professionals, recognizing that there are multiple options;*

- *Evaluation and verification of product certifications to provide clear information for consumer choice and clear direction for businesses to comply with FTC Green Marketing Guidelines (e.g., strong support for the How2Recycle label);*
- *Best practices information and resources, including model ordinances and contracts; and*
- *Education on downstream impacts on end-user markets and opportunities for investment in markets in the U.S.*

“The future of SMM is critical for the thousands of NRC members and others across the country working each and every day to manage discards through source reduction, reuse recycling, composting, product stewardship and other diversion methods” said Gary Liss, Summit Co-Chair. “These SMM professionals could benefit from being more a part of overall sustainability, triple bottom line and climate change initiatives. This will help solve other critical problems for communities and businesses at the same time and brings more allies to help on gaining approval for new policies, programs, facilities and funding.”

“This dialog and subsequent Action Plan will breathe new life into SMM programs and particularly ‘upstream’ efforts that need greater political support,” said Julie Rhodes, Summit Co-Chair. “More attention to SMM could result in other help for SMM professionals such as:

- More focus on redesign,
- Better solutions for problems,
- More collaboration, and
- New rules and incentives.”

The SMM Summit was led by the NRC in partnership with the Syracuse University Center for Sustainable Community Solution and University of Maryland Environmental Finance Center, and supported by [ISRI](#), [Starbucks](#), [Steel Recycling Institute](#), [ReTRAC](#), [SCS Engineers](#), [SMART Recycling South Carolina LLC](#), [Paper Recycling Coalition](#) and [Sims Recycling Solutions](#)

About the National Recycling Coalition

The National Recycling Coalition is a non-profit organization focused on promoting and enhancing SMM in North America, with a network of more than 6,000 members extending across waste reduction, reuse, composting, and recycling. For more than 30 years, the NRC has been a leader in driving education and policy around SMM. Learn more about the NRC at <http://nrcrecycles.org/>, and the SMM Summit at <http://nrcrecycles.org/sustainable-materials-management-summit/>.

About Sustainable Materials Management

The US EPA defines SMM as “an approach to serving human needs by using/reusing resources most productively and sustainably throughout their life cycles, from the point of resource extraction through material disposal. This approach seeks to minimize the amount of materials involved as well as associated environmental impacts, and account for economic efficiency and social considerations.” SMM includes actions across the full life-cycle of materials, including but not limited to managing materials after they have been discarded. SMM is about environmental justice, regional solutions, job training and local job creation, new materials science and design for recycling, innovative financing, product stewardship, sustainable organics management, a nexus of market-based and policy-based solutions, reuse and repurposing, highest-and-best use analysis for local decision-making, new management technology, enhanced recycling, and many more.

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