



**PRESS RELEASE**

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## **APR/NAPCOR Express Concerns about Impact of Degradable Additives**

### **"Not Shown Compatible with Recycling" say Trade Groups**

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The Association of Postconsumer Plastic Recyclers (APR) and the National Association for Plastic Container Resources (NAPCOR) released a statement today to address the growing problems resulting from the introduction of "degradable additives" into the plastic packaging marketplace, and the negative impact these materials will likely have on postconsumer plastics recycling.

"We acknowledge that our society and public policy leaders are interested in exploring alternative feedstock and end-of-life options for capital goods and packaging, including bio-sourced commodities," said William O'Grady, Vice President of Talco Plastics in Corona, CA, and Chairman of the APR. "However, APR and NAPCOR question the use of degradable additives in petroleum-based packaging as conflicting with society's commitment to recycling, and as disruptive to a well-developed recycling infrastructure."

Recently, a number of companies have introduced degradable additives, which they claim will allow petroleum-based plastic products to degrade after their initial use. They also claim these additives do not impact the recyclability of the product. APR and NAPCOR question the validity of the recycling compatibility claim.

According to Tom Busard, Vice President of Clean Tech, Inc. of Plymouth, MI, "These statements concerning recyclability are unconfirmed and very possibly misleading, as prescribed by the Federal Trade Commission's Green Guides." Busard, who also serves as Chairman of NAPCOR, went on to note that, "Not one of these claimants has contacted the recycling community in order to provide any data supporting their claims. No one has produced any third party testing data in support of the 'no impact' statements."



## The Association of Postconsumer Plastic Recyclers



“The facts are very clear,” said David Cornell, the Technical Director from APR. “The degradable additive concept effectively renders the product using the additive non-recyclable. Many recycled plastics are used to make durable goods. Failure of these next-use products, such as carpets or piping, could range from distressing to tragic.”

Steve Alexander, Executive Director of APR, noted that, “Post-consumer plastic feedstock is being used increasingly in products of higher value and possibly where human health and safety is a critical component of their performance. Degradable additives mixed in with recycled feedstock will potentially contaminate the final product. Advocates for the degradable additives approach should prove ‘no harm’ both for first recycled end-use applications and subsequent,” he added.

According to Cornell, APR’s membership has devoted considerable time and energy to produce guidelines to determine if a material meets or exceeds standards for recyclability. “We have a program in place to determine whether a material interferes with current recycling technology,” he noted. “Typically, any additive that diminishes performance properties renders the material non-recyclable. Should degradation-prone material be mixed with recyclable material, the sum of materials likely becomes contaminated to the point that none of the material is recyclable, leading to landfill disposal... which is exactly the wrong thing to do.”

Dennis Sabourin, Executive Director for NAPCOR, said, “It is important not only that the next use of a recycled bottle be unimpaired for its full service life, but that the next use material can itself be recycled. Strapping that contains plastic from used soft drink bottles is likely itself to be recycled into new strapping. This is key to the spirit and definition of sustainability, so it is important that any additive intended to degrade not impair the repeated use of the plastic molecules.”

APR and NAPCOR encourage companies seeking to use any additives to work with APR and plastics recyclers to ensure their material does not contaminate the material’s ability to be recycled.

The APR and NAPCOR position statement is attached for review.

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