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USING RECYCLED PET SAVES ENERGY AND GENERATES LESS GREENHOUSE GAS

New Life Cycle Inventory Study for PET and HDPE Recycled Plastic Resins

SONOMA, CA (May 17, 2010) – The National Association for PET Container Resources (NAPCOR) announced today the release of a new study that provides life cycle inventory (LCI) data for recycled polyethylene terephthalate (PET) and high density polyethylene (HDPE) plastic resins. The study's LCI report indicates that incorporating recycled PET resin in the manufacture of a package significantly reduces the environmental footprint of that package in terms of production energy required and greenhouse gas emissions.

“This is long-sought-after information for companies that want to include environmental sustainability as one of the ways in which they evaluate their product package options,” said Tom Busard, NAPCOR Chairman and VP Global Procurement and Material Systems for Plastipak Packaging. “There’s no true sustainability without recycling, and this new study confirms and quantifies the environmental benefits of recycling PET. We’re seeing more customers requesting LCIs in order to do Life Cycle Assessments (LCAs) so that they can more accurately understand the sustainability profiles of their packaging.” LCAs consider the complete life of a product or package, including the raw materials, manufacturing, and end of life.

Dennis Sabourin, NAPCOR Executive Director, added, “This is a scientific approach and provides an excellent tool for making informed decisions.” Sabourin went on to emphasize that the sustainability profile and analysis for the PET package must not only take into account its recyclability, and the increasing use of recycled PET resin content in new packaging, but also PET’s inherent performance characteristics: lightweight; shatter-resistant; safe; able to preserve taste and other product characteristics on-shelf; and its suitability to be made significantly lighter without sacrificing performance for a variety of product applications. Fundamentally, packaging exists in order to effectively deliver a product while preserving that product’s quality in a safe, cost effective, and sustainable manner.

The new LCI study was conducted by Franklin Associates, Ltd. and sponsored jointly by NAPCOR, the American Chemistry Council (ACC), the Association of Postconsumer Plastic Recyclers (APR), and the

PET Resin Association (PETRA). Using life cycle inventory (LCI) methodology, the study determines and quantifies 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 study results, as well as U.S. EPA and Energy Information Administration (EIA) data, the total amount of PET post consumer containers recycled in 2008, if reclaimed in the U.S., would require approximately 30 trillion Btu less energy than the amount of energy that would be required to produce the equivalent tonnage of virgin PET resin; this is equivalent to the annual energy use of 317,000 U.S. homes. The corresponding savings in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions is 1.1 million tons of CO₂ equivalents, an amount comparable to taking 189,000 cars off the road. For a single pound of recycled PET flake, the energy use required is reduced by 84%; the GHG emissions, by 71%.¹

Sabourin said, “We believe it extremely important for industry to cooperate with government and non-government agencies by using transparent methodologies and peer review protocols. This LCI report is extremely detailed and comprehensive in its scope; it gives our customers—and ultimately the consumer—confidence that they are making decisions based on good information.”

The new study’s findings are captured in “Final Report – Life Cycle Inventory of 100% Postconsumer HDPE and PET Recycled Resin from Postconsumer Containers and Packaging,” which is available on the sponsor organization web sites, including NAPCOR’s PET Sustainability page, <http://www.napcor.com/PET/sustainability.html>

Information from the new study will soon be added to the U.S. Life-Cycle Inventory Database. A project of the U.S. Department of Energy and its National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), this is a publicly available database that allows users to review and compare analysis results, <http://www.nrel.gov/lci/about.html>

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*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*

¹ Calculations are based on the volume of clean postconsumer PET flake produced from bottles recovered in the U.S. in 2008 (see http://www.napcor.com/PET/pet_reports.html), and the energy required to collect, sort and domestically reprocess, to flake, the tonnage of plastics containers recovered.