



Recycling of PET Thermoformed Packages NAPCOR Project Background & Position (July 2011)

- See additional NAPCOR position statements at <http://www.napcor.com/PET/positions.html> -

- 1) NAPCOR has been working for almost three years on identifying and removing the obstacles that prevent PET thermoformed packages from being recycled.
- 2) The objective of this work is to develop the same opportunities for the recycling of PET thermoformed packages as there are for PET bottles – without jeopardizing the existing PET bottle recycling infrastructure.
- 3) A parallel course of action was undertaken to identify the obstacles:
 - In-depth laboratory research to understand the technical issues;
 - The provision of almost one million pounds of post consumer thermoforms to PET bottle reclaimers and technology providers to allow them to do production runs, identify logistical and technical issues, and provide technical fixes.
- 4) The following were identified as the major obstacles:
 - Excessive contamination caused by “look-alike” packages made from PLA, OPS, PVC and PETG
 - The amount and type of adhesive used (see press release at http://www.napcor.com/pdf/therm_release.pdf)
 - The use of fluorescers in some imported PET packages
 - Mechanical engineering retrofits to allow the different shaped packages to flow freely through reclamation plant technologies
- 5) NAPCOR has worked with US and Canadian Reclaimers and the five largest grocers in Canada to address these issues.
- 6) Market options now exist for MRFs with autosort capacity to manually remove those thermoforms identified as PET and bale separately. For MRFs and intermediate processing centers, PET thermoforms can be included in a mixed rigid bale for which reclamation capacity is growing in the US and Canada. In order to nurture these domestic operations, export of this material is discouraged.
- 7) NAPCOR takes the following positions on the most desirable market option: being able to bale bottles and thermoforms together (one-bale):
 - Because of the extraordinary leadership provided by the Canadian grocers, NAPCOR feels that a one-bale option will be viable in Canada sometime in 2012.
 - ***While discussions with US grocers and other stakeholders are ongoing in the US, we do not see a one-bale option in the near future without some devaluing of the bale, thus at this time we recommend keeping the PET thermoforms out of the PET bottle bales.***