#3 Plastics | Subcommittee Meeting #3 Summary - Plastics September 1, 2021 2PM-5PM

Subcommittee Meeting #3 of the Plastics Subcommittee (#3-Plastics) was convened virtually via Zoom on September 1, 2021 from 2-5 PM, CST. Attendance for #3-Plastics is provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1. #3-Plastics Subcommittee Membership and Attendance

Name	Company	Attended 9/1/21
Harlan Buxbaum	Dee Zee, Inc.	Present
Michele Boney	West Liberty Foods	Present
Troy Willard	Can Shed LLC/ Iowa Recycling Association	Present
Merry Rankin	Iowa State University	Present
Julie Ketchum	Waste Management	Present
Mick Barry	Mid America Recycling	Absent
Scott Vander Sluis	Van's Sanitation and Recycling	Absent
Bryce Stalcup	Waste Commission of Scott County	Present
Jennifer Horner	That's Not Trash, LLC	Absent
Joe Bolick	Iowa Waste Reduction Center	Present
Sue Waters	Plastics Recycling of Iowa Falls, Inc.	Absent
Nicole Crain	Iowa Association of Business and Industry	Absent
Laurie Rasmus	DNR Internal SMM Team	Present
Amie Davidson	DNR Internal SMM Team	Present
Tom Anderson	DNR Internal SMM Team	Present
Jennifer Wright	DNR Internal SMM Team	Present
Jennifer Reutzel Vaughn	DNR Internal SMM Team	Present
Michelle Leonard	Consultant – SCS Engineers	Present
Christine Collier	Consultant – SCS Engineers	Present
Jeff Phillips	Consultant – SCS Engineers	Present
Karen Luken	Sub-Consultant – EESI*	Present
Brad Hartkopf (on behalf of Nicole Crain)	Iowa Association of Business and Industry	Present

* Economic Environmental Solutions International

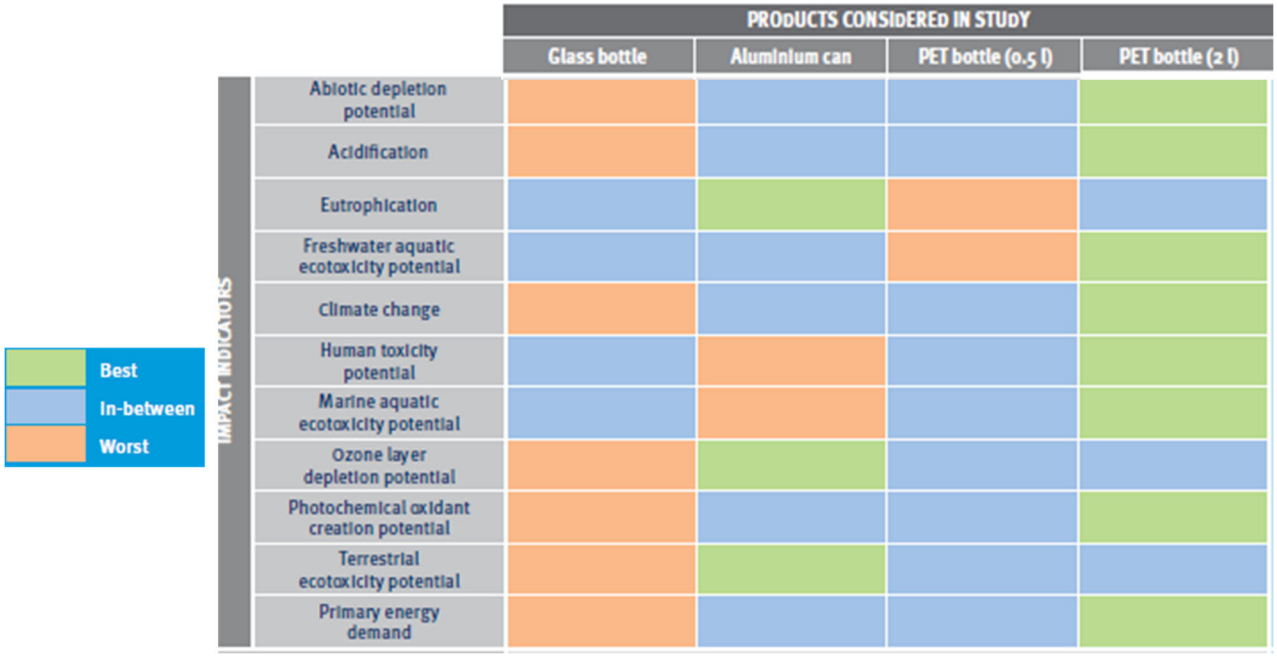
A. Subcommittee #3 - Plastics Summary

The meeting began with the project consulting team reviewing the agenda for this meeting (see Attachment A), the overall objectives of the Sustainable Materials Management (SMM) – Vision for Iowa project, the process and goals of the project process, and the goals for today's subcommittee meeting. The Stakeholder Meeting #2 schedule and Subcommittee responsibilities were also discussed. The slides presented for this Subcommittee meeting are included in Attachment B.

The project consulting team presented a series of slides from the United Nations Environmental Programs (UNEP) 2020 that illustrated the summary results of life cycle analyses (LCA) for a variety of beverage containers, bags, and clamshell containers. The purpose of these illustrations was to visually

summarize some of the LCA data results that were presented and discussed during the Subcommittee Meeting #2. The illustrations presented are shown in the figures below.

Figure 1 - Single-Use Plastic Bottles and Other Containers



Source: UNEP Plastic Bottles Report 2020

Key definitions:

- Abiotic Depletion = Depletion of resources such as fossil fuels, minerals, etc.
- Eutrophication = Impact on water quality due to runoff from land.

Figure 2 - Bottles Made of Virgin Fossil, Recycled Fossil, and/or Virgin Bio-Based PET

		PRODUCTS CONSIDERED IN STUDY						
		PET bottle						
		100 fossil-based PET	100% bio-based PET (TPA1)	100% bio-based PET (TPA2)	65% fossil- and 35% bio -based PET	65% bio-based (TPA1) and 35% recycled PET	65% bio-based (TPA2) and 35% recycled PET	65% fossil-based and 35% recycled PET
IMPACT INDICATORS	Climate change							
	Fossil fuel consumption							
	Water consumption							

Source: UNEP Plastic Bottles Report 2020

Figure 3 - Single-Use Plastic Bags and Alternatives

Performance Key	
	Best
	Better
	Worse

	Bags considered in study					
	Conventional single-use HDPE bag	Partly recycled single-use HDPE bag	Single-use Paper bag (partly virgin)	Single-use Paper bag (100% recycled)	Reusable LDPE bags	Reusable NWPP bags
Number of uses	1	1	1	1	1-44	1-44
Weight per functional unit (g)	61 – 2684	61 – 2684	457 – 20116	457 – 20116	296	622
Weight per bag (g)	6.2	6.2	54.4	54.4	35.6	Bag: 60.8; LDPE insert: 32
Climate change						
Water depletion						
Cumulative Energy Demand						
Terrestrial acidification						
Freshwater eutrophication						
Marine eutrophication						
Human toxicity						
Terrestrial ecotoxicity						
Freshwater and marine ecotoxicity						
Fossil Fuel Depletion						
Photochemical oxidant formation						

Source: UNEP Single Use Plastic Bottle and Alternative, 2020

Figure 4 - Single-Use and Reusable Takeaway Food Containers

INDICATORS	PRODUCTS CONSIDERED IN STUDY			
	Aluminium takeaway container	Extruded polystyrene takeaway container	Polypropylene takeaway container	Polypropylene food saver- reusable (tupperware)
Abiotic depletion potential of elements				208 times*
Abiotic depletion potential of fossil resources				18 times
Acidification potential				29 times
Eutrophication potential				18 times
Freshwater aquatic ecotoxicity potential				39 times
Global warming potential				18 times
Human toxicity potential				37 times
Marine aquatic ecotoxicity potential				24 times
Ozone layer depletion potential				27 times
Photochemical ozone creation potential				16 times
Terrestrial ecotoxicity potential				
Primary energy demand				19 times

Source: UNEP Plastic Bottles Report 2020

Figure 5 - Clamshell Containers

INDICATORS	PRODUCTS CONSIDERED IN STUDY		
	PLA	PET	PS
Climate change			
Aquatic acidification			
Ozone layer depletion			
Aquatic eutrophication			
Respiratory organics			
Respiratory inorganics			
Auatic ecotoxicity, water			
Energy			
Land occupation			

Source: UNEP Plastic Bottles Report 2020

The LCA studies have shown that the volume of product the container is able to hold is important when comparing similar containers to each other (i.e., 2 L vs. 0.5 L PET bottles). For example, the larger container is able to handle more product and therefore requires fewer containers and consumes less resources during transportation than smaller containers.

The LCA studies also have shown that the number of times that material can be used is important. For instance, plastic bags are assumed to be used multiple times while paper bags are assumed to be single-use. Therefore, when comparing the use of these two containers, plastic bags are more favorable according to the LCA studies.

The project consulting team then led participants through a discussion about what gaps there may be in Iowa as methods of diverting plastics from disposal. Identified potential gaps include:

- Data – Iowa does not have comprehensive or readily available data about what plastics are being recycled, manufactured, or being used in Iowa. Therefore, it is hard to measure the environmental impact of plastics in Iowa.
- Education and Research – The available plastic waste data in Iowa focuses primarily on litter impacts.
- Regulations – While Iowa has robust collection initiatives supported by the Iowa Bottle Bill, this regulation does not include several other containers. Iowa also recently passed regulations that established pre-emptions concerning banning the use of materials (i.e., plastic bags).

The project consulting team then presented identified strategies that work to address plastic waste through up-stream practices (i.e., production and manufacturing), consumer-based practices (i.e., change consumer behaviors), and end-of life practices (i.e., disposal alternatives). The identified strategies for each practice along with a brief description, and Subcommittee discussions are listed below.

Upstream Strategies:

- Design products for recycling or composting.
    - Manufacturers consider how the product can more easily be recycled and/or composted.
- Eliminate problematic and unnecessary packaging.
    - Standard packaging and containers with a focus on selecting packaging that is reusable, refillable, repurposable.
- Require post-consumer recycled content for packaging.
    - Creates markets for recycled plastics and is part of closed loop economy.
- EPR policy framework for packaging.
    - Establish frameworks for packaging collection and management. Producer is responsible for taking back the material for recycling or to fund these activities.
- Producer registry and reporting for packaging.

    - Establishes accountability for producers. Whether it is regulated or voluntary actions, the registry captures pertinent data.
- Polystyrene containers bans.
    - Bans the manufacturing and sale of the material (i.e., coolers, internal packaging, etc.).
- Plastic bags bans.
    - Bans manufacturing and sale of the material (i.e., single use retail bags, etc.)

Subcommittee Member Discussion:

- A lot of these items require a municipal or statewide regulatory/legislative change. The others have to be adopted by producers. How do we get the producers to want to adopt these changes?
    - Offer producers incentives. Perhaps initially it can be voluntary programs. Perhaps these businesses could be offered grants, low interest loans, tax credits, permitting/sitting/zoning technical assistance.
- The State does have recycling property tax exemption program. There is not a lot of interest because it is just related to property tax.
    - Under Iowa Code section 427.19, "personal property or improvements to real property or any portion of the property" are eligible for property tax exemption, if the property is "used primarily in the manufacturing process and resulting directly in the conversion of waste glass, waste plastic, wastepaper products, waste paperboard, or waste wood products into new raw materials or products composed primarily of recycled material".
    - Also there are some tax benefit/incentives related to sales tax in 423.2 and 423.3
- A state has programs that use funds derived from cap and trade programs to help support initiatives. This same state also uses unredeemed deposits from their Bottle Bill to help fund municipal recycling programs and sponsors competitive grants for industry to facilitate development of recycling infrastructure and other recycling projects.
- A state has passed legislation that specifies that that numeric code cannot be included inside the "chasing arrows" symbol unless the product is recyclable, under specified criteria.

Consumer Strategies:

- Standard for customer opt-in for food service packaging and accessories.
    - Requires restaurants to ask consumers if they want utensils placed in their takeout products rather than just including them. A similar requirement was recently passed by a municipality in another state.
- Encourage reusables for dine-in.
    - Allows customers to bring personal containers for leftovers and eliminates single use items for dine-in experience (plates, cups, cutlery).
- Encourage reuse/refill for take-out and delivery.

    - Encourage consumers to bring their own containers (i.e., beverage containers, food containers, etc.). Could include retailers providing a financial discount to encourage/reward this behavior.

- Develop reuse and refill pilots and funding sources.
    - Test some of these initiatives. A program in California visits businesses and provides funding to encourage them to participate in these programs. Funding includes infrastructure to be able to wash dishes and cups to help eliminate single-use food service ware.
- Provide education and awareness campaigns for refill, reuse, and repurpose.
    - Concentrate and identify what are the best ways to educate the public and use social marketing to change consumer behavior. Identify what barriers prevent consumers from participating in available programs.
- Implement to-go container and cup charges.
    - Punitive fees for activities that use/create this waste.
- Implement a plastic bag fee.
    - Punitive fees for activities that use/create this waste.

Subcommittee Member Discussion:

- Students could purchase a reusable container. The University would offer to wash the containers or the students could wash them. Health and safety concerns would need to be addressed.

End of Life Strategies:

- Provide education and awareness campaigns on contamination in recycling.
    - Education and awareness campaigns have proven to be successful in decreasing contamination and therefore increasing the opportunity to collect more recyclables.
- Provide education and awareness on littering.
    - Direct connection to littering and impacting the environment.
- Collect data on final destinations of materials/recycling facilities.
    - We have some information on recycling facilities, but need a better method to capture information on operations, processed volumes, and end markets in order to design better programs.
- Support development and adoption of reusable packaging systems.
    - Support the use of food and beverage containers that can be reused and refilled, and encourage consumers to buy in bulk and reuse packaging.
- Add single-use plastic bottles to the Bottle Bill.

    - The Iowa Bottle Bill currently does not include these containers.
- Add all non-carbonated containers to the Bottle Bill.
    - The Iowa Bottle Bill currently does not include these containers.

Subcommittee Member Discussion:

- New optical sorting equipment can fairly easily sort recyclable containers from the materials received at the material recovery facilities (MRFs). While this equipment can be expensive, the return on investment of this equipment in sales of sorted plastics has proven to be approximately one year. Removing single-use plastic bottles from the recyclable waste stream (by adding them to the Bottle Bill) would reduce revenue currently realized by MRFs.
- This project is trying to determine how to capture more material, not determine who receives the revenue.
- If the Bottle Bill doesn't include these bottles, what do we do to increase their capture rate?

The project consulting team then presented some influencer categories that are important considerations when making decisions. As we look to make decisions about potential future SMM strategies, we need to assess what we think we can control in the future, what we can control today, and what are things that we can do right away. Change can be difficult and we want to understand the change and the positive impacts that those changes will have. Some important decision making considerations include:

- Functional differences
- Production differences
- Technology maturity
- End of life practices
- Future technologies
- Geography
- Trade-offs and risks

The project consulting team then lead participants through a process in which strategies were prioritized for potential implementation within the **immediate (0-3 years), medium (4-10 years), or long-term (11+ years)**. The results of the completed prioritization items are shown below in Figure 6 and located in Attachment C.

Figure 6 – Prioritization Results for Plastics

*Single-use plastic bottles addition to the Bottle Bill depends on data.

<u>Subcommittee Member Prioritization Discussion:</u>

- Connecticut, as well as other states, have increased their deposit fees and have added plastic water bottles to their regulations.
- By adding water bottles to the Bottle Bill, are we just moving the materials from the recycling programs into the redemption centers or are we decreasing plastic bottles as part of litter as well?
- University students come from all geographies and backgrounds with different understandings of recycling programs and labels. Could we standardize the labels and information across Iowa?
    - There have been efforts across the US for many years trying to accomplish this. Perhaps this should be a goal of this SMM project.
- ISU is also looking for plastic waste (shredded and chipped) to test in their transportation side of engineering. Can plastics be used as a binder in concrete?
    - Halil Ceylan is the contact at ISU for this research.
- Could we establish some type of eco labeling as an incentive for companies be able to communicate to consumers their environmentally sound practices?

    - This is something the Iowa Waste Reduction Center (IWRC) looked into for the Green Brewery certification program. Unfortunately, there are many different types of labels and varying areas of focus and importance within industries, as well as the consumers of various products. It is difficult to establish one label type that means something positive to all.

- Have any contiguous states around Iowa implemented EPR?
    - Not for packaging. However, Minnesota has several EPR based programs.
    - Iowa does have a toxics in packaging EPR that is part of Iowa regulations.
- Minnesota has requirements for state agencies to purchase materials that have recycled content. Requirements are in place for a variety of products including, but not limited to electronics, paints, mattresses, traditional recyclables, etc. This helps create market/demand.
- Minnesota has a solid waste tax that generates about $80 million per year. Sixty percent of the revenue generated from this tax goes towards Minnesota solid waste programs and operations.
- Iowa state agencies had a purchasing standard that required recycled content. This purchasing standard may have sunset.
- We need to de-politicize these issues so that it isn't an administration driven thing – but more of an industry driven thing.
- There are existing standards for green product certifications that could be used or built upon.

B. Research Request List

Through the discussions and in follow up discussions, various topics have been identified for further research. These are provided below.

- Recycling Property Tax exemption program
- Iowa Green Government Initiative
- Existing standards for Green Product Certification
- EPR Bills in Maine and Oregon

C. Other Notes

Other items of note from the #3 - Plastics meeting are as follows:

- Second Stakeholder Meeting will be held on September 30, 2021. Subcommittee members in addition to other interested parties are invited and encouraged to attend.

Attachments:

Attachment A: Agenda

Attachment B: PowerPoint Presentation

Attachment C: Additional Information

Attachment A
Agenda

Subcommittee Meeting #3 – Plastics

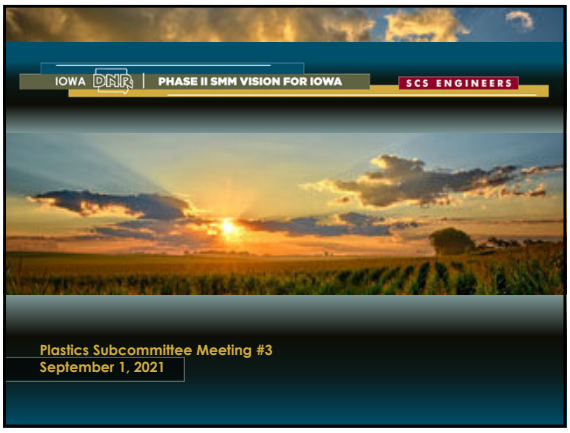
September 1, 2021

2:00PM – 5:00PM (CST)

Virtual Meeting

1. Recap SMM Goal, Process, and Schedule
2. Additional Data
3. Fundamental Questions
4. Potential SMM Strategies
5. Break
6. Prioritize Strategies
7. Next Steps
    a. Stakeholder Meeting#2 (September 30, 2021)
    b. Future meetings dates and logistics

Attachment B
PowerPoint Presentation



Agenda

- **Recap SMM Goal, Process, and Schedule**
- **Additional Data**
- **Fundamental Questions**
- **Potential SMM Strategies**
- **Break**
- **Prioritize Strategies**
- **Next Steps**
  - Stakeholder Meeting#2 (September 30, 2021)
  - Future meetings dates and logistics

Goal

Establish a clear direction for implementing an SMM system with immediate, medium and long-term strategies

Phases of SMM Process

Phase I: What is it and should we do it?

Phase II: Prioritization and timing of what we should do and how we should accomplish it

Phase III: Ongoing Implementation

Phase II Process

Select specific material types within each category

Define and prioritize specific strategies
- Legislation
- Policies
- Programs
- Infrastructure

Identify implementation timeline, responsible party, funding measures, and performance metrics

Material Types Selected

Organics & Fibers	Plastics	Renewable Energy Equipment	Construction & Demolition
Edible Food	Single-Use PET Water Bottles	Wind Turbines	Interior Building Components
Pre-Consumer Spoiled Food	Plastic Film/Bags	Solar Panels	Roofing Materials
Compostable/AD Paper, Food and Yard Waste	Polystyrene (Styrofoam)	Storage Batteries	Drywall, Plaster and Gypsum Board
			Treated and Untreated Wood

Subcommittee Role

- Finalized Material-Specific Groups
- Continue as Active Working Groups
- Size and Composition May Change
  - Combination of Invitation and Application
  - Composition is Fluid
- Representation of Various Interests Reflecting Material Life Cycle
- Make Recommendations to the Stakeholders
- Vital to Project Progress and Success

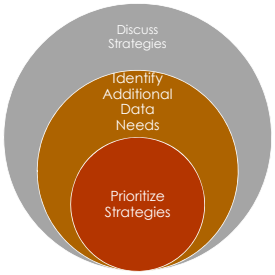
Stakeholder Group Role

- Provide various perspectives on how SMM will be adopted and implemented in Iowa
- Provide on-going guidance to subcommittees
- Will consider and endorse subcommittee recommendations

Subcommittee Recommendation Process

1. Develop Recommendations
2. Present Recommendations to Stakeholders
3. Consider Stakeholder Input and Modify Recommendations
4. Present Further Developed Recommendations to Stakeholders

Today's Focus



Where Do We Go Next

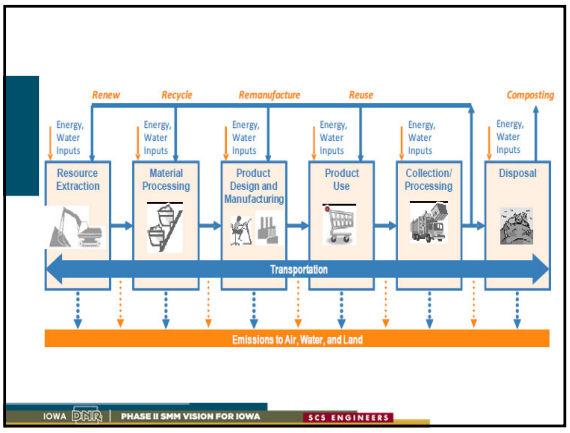
1. Present strategies and rankings to the Stakeholder Group on September 30th
2. Receive input from Stakeholder Group
3. Reconvene to
   - Reevaluate strategy ranking
   - Identify implementation timelines, responsible party, funding measures, and performance metrics
4. Present implementation requirements to Stakeholder Group

Stakeholder Meeting #2: Sept 30th

- Subcommittees Present Recommendations
- Led by Appointed Representative
- Assistance from Facilitators
- Breakout rooms for Further Discussion

Agenda

9:00 – 9:15	Welcome and Introductions
9:15 – 11:30	Subcommittee Updates
11:30 – 11:45	Initial Group Comments/Breakout Selection
11:45 – 12:30	Lunch Break
12:30 – 1:15	Breakout #1
1:15 – 1:20	Switch Break
1:20 – 2:05	Breakout #2
2:05 – 2:30	Wrap Up and Next Steps



Single-Use Plastic Bottles & Other Containers

IMPACT INDICATORS	Glass bottle	Aluminium can	PET bottle (0.5 l)	PET bottle (2 l)
Abiotic depletion potential				
Acidification				
Eutrophication				
Freshwater aquatic ecotoxicity potential				
Climate change				
Human toxicity potential				
Marine aquatic ecotoxicity potential				
Ozone layer depletion potential				
Photochemical oxidant creation potential				
Terrestrial ecotoxicity potential				
Primary energy demand				

Best
In-between
Worst

UNEP Plastic Bottles Report 2020

Bottles Made of Virgin fossil, Recycled Fossil, and/or Virgin Bio-Based PET

IMPACT INDICATORS	PET bottle: 100 fossil-based PET	100% bio-based PET (TPA1)	100% bio-based PET (TPA2)	65% fossil- and 35% bio -based PET	65% bio-based (TPA1) and 35% recycled PET	65% bio-based (TPA2) and 35% recycled PET	65% fossil-based and 35% recycled PET
Climate change							
Fossil fuel consumption							
Water consumption							

Best
In-between
Worst

UNEP Plastic Bottles Report 2020

Single Use Plastic Bags and Alternatives

	Conventional single-use HDPE bag	Partly recycled single-use HDPE bag	Single-use Paper bag (partly virgin)	Single-use Paper bag (100% recycled)	Reusable LDPE bags	Reusable NWPP bags
Number of uses	1	1	1	1	1-44	1-44
Weight per functional unit (g)	61 – 2684	61 – 2684	457 – 20116	457 – 20116	296	592
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Climate change						
Water depletion						
Cumulative Energy Demand						
Terrestrial acidification						
Freshwater eutrophication						
Marine eutrophication						
Human toxicity						
Terrestrial ecotoxicity						
Freshwater and marine ecotoxicity						
Fossil Fuel Depletion						
Photochemical oxidant formation						

Performance Key: Best; Better; Worse

UNEP SUPB and Alternatives, 2020

Takeaway Food Containers Single-Use and Reusable

INDICATORS	Aluminium takeaway container	Extruded polystyrene takeaway container	Polypropylene takeaway container	Polypropylene food saver - reusable (tupperware)
Abiotic depletion potential of elements				208 times*
Abiotic depletion potential of fossil resources				18 times
Acidification potential				29 times
Eutrophication potential				18 times
Freshwater aquatic ecotoxicity potential				39 times
Global warming potential				18 times
Human toxicity potential				37 times
Marine aquatic ecotoxicity potential				24 times
Ozone layer depletion potential				27 times
Photochemical ozone creation potential				16 times
Terrestrial ecotoxicity potential				
Primary energy demand				19 times

Best
In-between
Worst

UNEP, 2020

Clamshell Containers

INDICATORS	PRODUCTS CONSIDERED IN STUDY		
	PLA	PET	PS
Climate change			
Aquatic acidification			
Ozone layer depletion			
Aquatic eutrophication			
Respiratory organics			
Respiratory inorganics			
Auatic ecotoxicity, water			
Energy			
Land occupation			

Best
In-between
Worst

UNEP, 2020

Strategies

Fundamental Questions

Fundamental Questions

What are the environmental impacts associated with plastics?

What are the Iowa plastics prevention and landfill diversion gaps:

- Data
- Education
- Regulations
- Policies
- Infrastructure
- Funding

Upstream Strategies

- Design for recycling or composting
- Eliminate problematic and unnecessary packaging
- Require post-Consumer Recycled Content for packaging
- Adopt EPR policy framework for packaging
- Establish producer registry and reporting for packaging
- Ban Polystyrene Containers
- Ban Plastic bags

Consumer-Based Strategies

- Implement standard for customer opt-in for foodservice packaging and accessories
- Encourage reusables for dine-In
- Encourage reuse/Refill for take-out and delivery
- Develop Reuse and refill pilots and funding
- Provide education and awareness campaigns for refill, reuse, repurpose
- Implement to-go container and cup charges
- Implement Plastic bag fee

End-of-Life Strategies

- Provide education and awareness campaigns on contamination in recycling
- Provide education and awareness on littering
- Collect data on final destinations of materials/recycling facilities
- Support development and adoption of reusable packaging systems
- Add single-use plastic bottles to Bottle Bill
- Add all non-carbonated containers to Bottle Bill

BREAK (10 Minutes)

Whiteboard

Important Considerations of Decision-Making

- Functional Differences
- Production Differences
- Technology Maturity
- End-of-Life Practices
- Future Technologies
- Geography
- Trade-offs and Risks

Where Do We Go Next

- Present strategies and rankings to the Stakeholder Group on September 30th
- Receive input from Stakeholder Group
- Reconvene to
  - Reevaluate strategy ranking
  - Identify implementation timelines, responsible party, funding measures, and performance metrics
- Present implementation requirements to Stakeholder Group

Attachment C
Additional Information

Plastics

	Immediate (0-3 years)	Medium (4-10 years)	Long-Term (11+ years)
Upstream Measures	Design for recycling or composting Data collection on post-consumer recycled content purchasing for government agencies State define recyclable, compostable, biodegradable	Eliminate problematic and unnecessary packaging Reconsider Ban on Bans Require post-consumer recycled content purchasing for government agencies	Local or statewide ban plastic bags Local or statewide ban polystyrene containers Require post-consumer recycled content for packaging Establish producer registry and reporting for packaging Monitor EPR policy framework for packaging in other states Consider/Adopt EPR policy framework for packaging
Consumer Actions	Develop reuse and refill pilots and funding Encourage reuseables for dine-in Education and awareness campaigns for refill, reuse, and repurpose Research H&S codes on reusable containers Encourage reuse/refill for take-out and delivery Reuse of take out containers for food distribution	Implement to-go container and cup charges Standards for customer opt-in for food service packaging and accessories Implement plastic bag fee	
End of Life	Data on volumes of bottle bill vs MRF for collection Data on statewide (Iowa) standards on labeling and recycling materials accepted - terminology consistent Education and awareness campaign to reduce contamination in recycling programs Support research on plastics transformation into new product, fuel, etc. Education and awareness on littering Collection data on final destinations of materials / recycling facilities	Add all non-carbonated containers to the Bottle Bill* Add SUPB (water) to Bottle Bill*	Evaluation of recycling methods throughout state Support development and adoption of reusable packaging systems

* Single-use plastic bottles addition to the Bottle Bill depends on data.