



# RECYCLING ADVOCATES

June 2003

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*Involving people in creating a sustainable future through local efforts to reduce, reuse, and recycle*

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## “Glass to Trash” Bill Stopped Cold

*Attempts to gut recycling system  
stalled*

Last month in a late-session legislative maneuver, Representative Bill Garrard introduced House Bill 3637, better known as the “glass to trash” bill, at the request of the Oregon Beer and Wine Distributors Association. HB 3637 would have amended Oregon recycling statute and allowed for source-separated recyclable glass (cullet) to be landfilled. The bill was pure special interest politics and an attack on Oregon’s 20-year-old Opportunity to Recycle Act, as well as our 32-year-old Bottle Bill.

The bill’s supporters based their arguments on the myth that there are insufficient markets for glass cullet in Oregon. On the contrary, plenty of markets for cullet in Oregon do exist, and they rely on our recycled glass bottles. In 2001, Oregonians recycled 83,240 tons of container glass cullet. Ninety-four percent of this was used to make new glass products, mostly bottles, and some of it went into fiberglass insulation. About 6% was crushed and used as aggregate in construction projects. Anybody who has a rock crusher and produces specification aggregate for road beds, utility trench bedding, or other construction aggregate can receive and blend in glass bottles and still meet the required specifications. They can even meet the specifications using crushed glass alone. For all of Oregon the need for aggregate is over 100 times greater than the amount that crushed glass can currently provide.

If the bill had not been stopped by the advocacy of citizens statewide, Orego-

## Aluminum Can Recycling

*Rate Drops for Fifth Year in a Row*

The recycling rate for used aluminum beverage cans has sunk to its lowest point since 1980, according to the Container Recycling Institute, a non-profit organization that tracks beverage container sales and recycling trends nationwide.

On April 11, 2003, the Aluminum Association, a Washington-based industry trade group, announced that the used beverage can recycling rate for the year 2002 was 53.4%. When this year’s data are adjusted for the 5.3 billion imported scrap cans that were not originally sold in the United States, however, the actual domestic aluminum can recycling rate is only 48.4%. This is lower than last year’s domestic recycling rate of 49.2% (or 55.4%, according to the Aluminum Association). Of the 100 billion cans sold, 51.6 billion were wasted in 2002. Only 48.4 billion cans were recycled

Whether one adheres to the Aluminum Association’s measurement method or that of the Container Recycling Institute and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, there is no dispute that the U.S. used beverage can (UBC) recycling rate is in a sustained slide. This is the fifth consecutive annual decline in the UBC recycling rate.

According to Jenny Gitlitz, research director for the Container Recycling Institute, the slipping beverage can recycling rate means that 39% more aluminum is being landfilled, incinerated, or littered now than a decade ago.

“We wasted 763,000 tons of cans last year,” Gitlitz said, “and that was up from 550,000 tons wasted in 1992. Replacing these wasted cans with new cans made from virgin materials will waste the

## Cyber Recycling for Kids

*Web sites to keep kids busy over  
the summer*

By Lori Stole

It’s summer vacation time again! Check out these web sites for kids, with lots of activities and information about recycling and waste prevention. Your kids will have fun and learn at the same time.

**[www.epa.gov/epahome/students.htm](http://www.epa.gov/epahome/students.htm)**

This EPA site is targeted at teachers, students or younger kids.

Includes a section specific to recycling:  
**[www.epa.gov/kids/garbage.htm](http://www.epa.gov/kids/garbage.htm)**

**[www.rmi.org/sitepages/pid468.php](http://www.rmi.org/sitepages/pid468.php)**

From Rocky Mountain Institute: Choose kid’s sections for some environmental focuses.

**[www.kid-at-art.com](http://www.kid-at-art.com)**. The Imagination Factory offers kids ideas for creating art from scrap, including an activity of the week.

**[www.metrokc.gov/DNR/Kidsweb/solid\\_waste\\_main.htm](http://www.metrokc.gov/DNR/Kidsweb/solid_waste_main.htm)**. This King County site is kind of like an interactive recycling encyclopedia for kids.

**[www.ollierecycles.com/club/club.htm](http://www.ollierecycles.com/club/club.htm)**. Check out the activities in Ollie’s World.

**[www.ciwm.ca.gov/Kidstuff](http://www.ciwm.ca.gov/Kidstuff)**. Take the waste awareness quiz, and more activities from the California Integrated Waste Management Board.

**[www.earth911.org/master.asp?s=kids&a=kids/kids.asp](http://www.earth911.org/master.asp?s=kids&a=kids/kids.asp)**. This site from earth 911 lets you start by selecting your grade level.

**[www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/kidsPage.html](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/kidsPage.html)**. Washington’s Department of Ecology offers links to all kinds of recycling activities for kids.

**[www.eelink.net](http://www.eelink.net)**. Environmental Education Resources on the Internet. Spon-

### **"Glass to Trash," continued**

nians would likely have lost trust in the effectiveness of our recycling system. The success of residential recycling programs depends on our confidence that the effort we put into separating materials for recycling is indeed helping our environment. If people take the time to properly prepare their recyclable materials for recycling, then they should be assured that those recyclables are not just being thrown away.

HB 3637 would have affected the recycling of all glass bottles in this state, whether collected via the bottle bill, curbside collection or at a recycling depot. The bill allowed the bottles that we return for recycling via any of these methods to be discarded, without justification or even notice.

Thanks to a huge outcry from recycling supporters around the state, the bill's sponsors have pulled it back in to committee, where it is believed it will languish without being moved to the House floor for a vote.

Citizens who care about recycling, Oregon Conservation Network, Association of Oregon Recyclers, OSPIRG, Oregon Environmental Council and many others responded in droves, flooding legislators' offices with more than 600 comments in less than a week.

Thank you, Recycling Advocates members and friends, who called and wrote legislators. Special thanks to the Oregon Conservation Network for highlighting this issue in its weekly SalemWatch.

Recycling Advocates keeps members up to date through action alerts. To sign up for the action alert list, contact us at [info@recyclingadvocates.org](mailto:info@recyclingadvocates.org).

## **RECYCLING ADVOCATES**

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### **Cyber Recycling, continued**

sored by North American Association for Environmental Education: While not specifically directed to kids there are many directions to explore here, some of which lead to kids activities of all types.

## **Environmental Design of Electronics**

*Creating design incentives that promote recycling*

By Wayne Rifer

Electronic products pose a new challenge for recyclers when they become waste. Traditionally we have dealt with single-material recyclables, like newspapers, bottles and cans. Increasingly we are addressing the challenge of recycling complex products, like carpet and electronics.

Effective recycling – e.g., recycling that is affordable and eco-efficient – depends as strongly on the design of the product as it does on the recycling system.

Consequently, product manufacturers must be engaged in helping make the recycling system work. This is one of the main reasons that the EPA and others have been developing a product stewardship approach to the end-of-life management of carpet, electronics and other products to come.

As you are aware, Recycling Advocates has been active in the Western Electronic Product Stewardship Initiative and the National Electronic Product Stewardship Initiative (WEPSI and NEPSI), two multi-stakeholder dialogues dedicated to developing and financing a new recycling infrastructure.

Many of us had hoped that by simply engaging manufacturers to take financial and/or physical responsibility for the end-of-life infrastructure for their products, we could send a signal – an economic incentive – to improve environmental design. We have learned in the last two years, however, that that signal is at best insufficient.

Consequently the EPA is funding a new initiative, called the Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT). Its goal is to use public procurement to reward companies who improve environmental design. Specifically, EPEAT hopes to help public

## **Calling All Recycling Advocates!**

*Take part in the Annual Meeting and see the film Blue Vinyl.*

Come meet fellow Recycling Advocate members at 5:30 p.m. on July 22 (location TBA). The meeting will include time to network, meet and elect board members, and discuss future plans.

RA will show the film *Blue Vinyl* immediately after the meeting at 7:00 p.m. at PSU. The film is a humorous but sobering exploration of the relationship between consumers and the PVC industry. *Blue Vinyl* won the cinematography award in the documentary competition at the 2002 Sundance Film Festival.

RA needs volunteers to help publicize the meeting and film screening, specifically assistance with flyer distribution (physical and via e-mail), and press release drafting and distribution. If you can lend a hand with any of these tasks, please contact us at (503) 777-0909 or by e-mail at [info@recyclingadvocates.org](mailto:info@recyclingadvocates.org).

For more information on the annual meeting and the film, visit our web site at [www.recyclingadvocates.org](http://www.recyclingadvocates.org). The film screening is cosponsored with OSPIRG and the Oregon Student Public Interest Research Group.

## **Legislation Watch**

*HB 3021 moves to Senate while SB 867 stalls*

House Bill 3021 requires beverage dealers to report annually the number of aluminum, glass and plastic containers sold, collected and redeemed to the Oregon Liquor Control Commission. The bill passed the House with weakening amendments on May 6. Currently, it is in the Oregon Senate's Business and Labor committee.

In early May, SB 867, the e-waste bill sponsored by Recycling Advocates, was passed out of the General Government committee with amendments. They gave a do pass recommendation and asked that the referral to Ways and Means be rescinded. The Senate President and President Pro Tempore denied the rescinding of the referral, and the bill has been sitting in Ways and Means since then.

- Continued on page 3, column 1

**Aluminum wasting, continued**

energy equivalent of 16.2 million barrels of crude oil, and will generate over 3 million tons of greenhouse gas emissions.”

“The irony is that while Americans are trashing almost three quarters of a million tons of beverage cans a year,” Gitlitz said, “the major aluminum companies are forging ahead with plans to build new aluminum smelters—and hydroelectric dams for power—in environmentally-sensitive areas including Brazil, Iceland, Malaysia and Mozambique.”

According to Gitlitz, the dam in Iceland will supply Alcoa’s new 322,000 ton smelter, and will submerge 22 square miles of tundra, including habitat for reindeer and the pink-footed goose, up to 60 waterfalls, and what has been called the Icelandic equivalent of the Grand Canyon.

Source: Container Recycling Institute. For the CRI’s new report on aluminum wasting, visit [www.container-recycling.org](http://www.container-recycling.org).

**EPEAT, continued**

agencies identify and preferentially purchase computing devices that are more recyclable, retain a higher value, entail a lower cost, and contain fewer hazards to be managed at the end-of-life.

Government and large institutions buy a lot of computers. If they can credibly know which models are better from a life cycle environmental perspective, and therefore result in a lower “total cost of ownership” – e.g., a lower cost to the agencies when they are disposed of – they will provide a strong marketplace signal for product designers and manufacturers.

At the same time the EPEAT project must be cautious not to cause unintended consequences, such as, a significant delay in the time-to-market

for product developers, or a degradation of some other valued product attributes, or raise the price.

Several electronics manufacturers are demonstrating that it is possible to design products for the environment and still have all the other characteristics that we value. The goal of EPEAT is to reward those who do so, and to have design for environment become a universal industry standard.

EPEAT will kick off with a workshop in Chandler, Arizona in June, hosted by Intel. It will then assemble a multi-stakeholder development team to design a product environmental assessment tool, and the organizational arrangements that will be necessary to operate it. For more information, visit the EPEAT web site at [www.epeat.net](http://www.epeat.net).

**Master Recycler Program Moves**

*City of Portland chosen to host successful program*

With the closing of the Multnomah County Extension Service Office at the end of June, the Master Recycling Program is moving to the City of Portland’s Office of Sustainable Development. In order to continue this valuable program, OSU Extension and the Master Recycler advisory board decided the program should be centrally located in an urban setting with a

fiscally stable environment. Although the program is funded through outside sources, it requires a match of overhead and some support by the hosting agency. Proposals from the City of Portland and Portland State University were reviewed.

Megan Cogswell will move to the City of Portland Office of Sustainable Development Office in the EcoTrust building on May 27. She will leave the coordinator position at the end of June. The City of Portland has begun an open recruitment hiring process. Information about the position will be announced as soon as it is available. Carolyn Collopy will handle the tasks of running the program in the interim.

According to Bruce Walker of the City of Portland Office of Sustainable Development, the program will proceed as scheduled with the Master Recycler class series in October.

*(Editor’s note: RA serves on the advisory board of the Master Recycler program. The RA board thanks Megan for her dedication to the program and wishes her well in her future ventures.)*

**Mark Your Calendars!**

*Annual RA Membership Meeting  
July 22, 2003 at 5:30 p.m.  
Location TBA*



**RECYCLING ADVOCATES**  
Membership Application

\$25 Regular    \$10-24 Living Lightly    \$50 Sustainer    \$\_\_\_\_\_ Other

*I’m giving a gift membership to the recipient below.\**

*Sign me up for Action Alerts*    *Contact me about volunteering for RA*

Please enclose a check and mail to: PO Box 6736, Portland, OR 97228-6736

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Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Day \_\_\_\_\_ Evening \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  Send my newsletter by e-mail

\*Your name, if this is a gift membership: \_\_\_\_\_

*Your membership contribution to RA is tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.*



**Give a gift membership this summer!**

## Upcoming Events and Workshops

### **ILLAHEE Environment Matters Evening Lecture Series**

*Human Natures: Genes, Cultures, and the Human Prospect*

Presenter: Dr. Paul Ehrlich, world-renowned biologist and author of *The Population Bomb*.

Date: June 11, 2003

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Location: Portland, First Congregational Church, 1126 SW Park

For more details e-mail

cwieden@illahee.org or call (503) 222-2719. Admission charged.

### **Association of Oregon Recyclers' 17th Annual Education Conference**

Dates: June 19, 2003

Eugene, Valley River Inn

### **Association of Oregon Recyclers' 25th Annual Recycling Conference & Trade Show**

Dates: June 20-21, 2003

Eugene, Valley River Inn

Visit [www.aorr.org](http://www.aorr.org) for more information or call (503) 661-4475.

### **SCRAP Events**

*First Annual "OF JUNK AND JEWELS*

*- Exploring Potentials" Art Show*

A benefit for p:ear and SCRAP, with music by Stephen Cohen and p:ear youth.

Date: June 5, 2003

Time: 6:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.

Location: Portland, p:ear gallery, 809 SW Alder

### *SCRAP Workshop: Matte-Cutting Techniques*

Learn to use the SCRAPo'matic matte-cutter (training allows future access to the cutter in the SCRAP workshop room).

Date: June 14, 2003

Time: 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. 4pm.

Location: Portland, 3625B N. Mississippi Avenue.

Space is limited, please call Teri at (503) 294-0769 to register.

*SCRAP: Bridal and Anniversary Show- Reuse ideas & inspiration for elegant & memorable occasions. Think, "If Martha was scrappy..."*

Dates: Runs through June

Times: Wed. – Sat. from noon to 6:00

p.m. and Sun. from noon to 5:00 p.m.

Location: Portland, 3625B N. Mississippi Avenue.

### **The Virescence Project Display**

The Virescence Project explores "the state or condition of becoming green."

Participating artists were required to incorporate recycled paint and other materials into their work.

Dates: Through June 27, 2003

Location: Portland, Metro Building, 600 NE Grand Ave.

For more information, call Metro at (503) 797-1804.

### **Recycling Advocates Board Meeting**

Date: June (TBA)

Time: 7:30 p.m.

For location and information, call 503-777-0909.

*Copied on 100% post-consumer content recycled paper.*

**Just what is Blue Vinyl? Find out inside on page 2.**

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