



CHANGING TIMES...CHINA REFUSES TO ACCEPT MATERIALS BEING RECYCLED INCLUDING LARGE VOLUMES FROM THE UNITED STATES

According to a June 7th *Wall Street Journal* article, China is rejecting shipments of recyclables with contaminants above 0.5%, a level that most U.S. recyclers have difficulty meeting. Residential recyclables are typically harvested in single pickups and separated at processing centers. In some instances, collection practices have changed and in other instances those operating recyclable processing facilities have slowed down conveyor lines to allow more contaminants to be picked out of the mixed recyclable waste stream, as the recyclables go past the pickers on the conveyor.

Prices for recyclables are plummeting, and a glut of paper and plastic is causing materials to accumulate and increasing percentages of materials are being sent to landfills. In some states, municipalities and counties, it is not allowed to take recyclables to landfills but increasingly there is no alternative.

In many instances, recyclables in towns could be paid for, but now they have to pay to get rid of the material. An example in one New Jersey town is that they were receiving ten dollars a ton for paper, and now they must pay several dollars per ton to have the material sorted, and then there is no financial return.

One large waste company is terminating existing contracts due to the wide swing in recyclables financial returns.

To help, there are some new processing approaches being undertaken as follows:

- The market glut is providing a windfall of mixed plastic for Renewlogy, a Salt Lake City company that converts scrap plastic to diesel and petrochemicals by melting it in reactors without air, said founder Priyanka Bakaya. Lower production costs from continuous operations, coupled with growing production volumes, mean that a \$5-million Renewlogy reactor can make money even if oil prices fall as low as \$30 a barrel, Ms. Bakaya said. She wants to build dozens of reactors in coming years near recyclable-processing centers with abundant supplies of low-value mixed plastic.
- Ohio-based RES Polyflow LLC expects to convert 100,000 tons of mixed plastic annually into 16 million gallons of diesel and naphtha-a petrochemical used to make new plastic-at a plant opening next year in Ashley, Ind. Oil company BP PLC in March agreed to buy products from the plant.

"We see ourselves as a new market for the recycling industry," said Michael Dungan, RES Polyflow's director of sales and marketing.

(By Bob Tita, Wall Street Journal - 6-7-18)

We will keep you informed on this important issue in the RT Review.

- Gary Brown



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