
ReMA 2024 Advocacy Agenda



Recycled Materials
Association
Sustainable. Resilient. Essential.

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Introduction

Today, many of the roads we drive on, the cars we drive in, the wires and beams in our homes, and the boxes that bring consumer goods and food to households all come from recycled materials. Through this activity, the recycled materials industry is making the U.S. and global manufacturing supply chain more sustainable by supplying high-quality renewable resources to make new products. This avoids the need to extract precious natural resources while reducing carbon emissions in the process.

ReMA's mission is to promote safe, economically sustainable, and environmentally responsible recycling through education, networking and advocacy. Continually innovating, the industry is finding ways to more efficiently recycle more material into the everyday items and essential infrastructure that people depend on.

Building on the evolving role the recycled materials industry has in ensuring a sustainable and resilient future for our planet, our 2024 Advocacy Agenda is focused on:

- ▶ Championing Environmental Stewardship within Reasonable Regulatory Frameworks
- ▶ Maintaining Market Access, Development and Sustained Economic Growth
- ▶ Ensuring a Safe and Circular Environment in the Era of Decarbonization and Increasing Electrification
- ▶ Promoting Safe and Responsible Recycling Operations
- ▶ Shaping the Future by Advancing Education, Workforce Development, and Responsible Governance

We will work hand-in-hand with our 1,600 members, the communities in which they operate, governments of all levels, and other stakeholders to implement our advocacy strategy and fulfill our vision of a future which includes safe, economically sustainable, and environmentally responsible recycling. Please visit our website for more resources and information on the priorities within this document, and our current initiatives.



Championing Environmental Stewardship within Reasonable Regulatory Frameworks

In an era where safeguarding the environment for future generations is of top priority, the recycled materials industry is finding itself increasingly impacted by evolving policies and regulations aimed at addressing a range of environmental concerns. These changes, particularly in the air and water sectors, can sometimes bring about more stringent and occasionally burdensome legislative and regulatory landscapes. The balance between environmental stewardship and economic viability is vital to the recycled materials industry, and ReMA is working to adapt to the shifting policy landscape and advocating for the role the recycling sector plays in a sustainable tomorrow.

Per-and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) Challenges in Recycling

The pervasiveness of Per and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) have become focal points for both U.S. and global policymakers. Found in products ranging from carpets and food packaging to paints and certain automobile components, these chemicals are inevitable in the waste and recycling streams and as such, pending regulatory efforts raise concerns within the recycled materials industry. As recyclers neither design nor produce such substances, it is essential for the industry to be acknowledged as a passive receiver of PFAS-containing materials. ReMA is committed to engaging with policymakers to advocate for regulations that fairly acknowledge the industry's role, seeking solutions that do not disproportionately burden recyclers for issues beyond their control.

Navigating Permitting & Zoning Complexities

Permitting and zoning processes have become increasingly intricate, driven by more stringent environmental regulations and well-intentioned integration of environmental justice principles. Recyclers strive to be responsible community members, committed to environmental stewardship and the sustainable management of resources. As new regulations and standards, such as those for Volatile Organic Compound Emissions, are developed and enforced, ReMA advocates for transparent processes and the meaningful involvement of all stakeholders, both directly and indirectly impacted. Clear, practical, and scientifically proven guidelines that balance environmental goals with the operational needs of the recycled materials industry are essential.



Maintaining Market Access, Development and Sustained Economic Growth

The recycled materials industry plays a pivotal role in society, not just in terms of economic output and employment growth, but in everyday life. The industry is not only a domestic powerhouse but also a key player in the global market, with nearly one-third of all U.S.-processed recycled materials being exported internationally each year. Globally, the industry provides nearly 40 percent of manufacturers' raw materials needs, playing an integral but underappreciated role in enhancing the sustainability of the global manufacturing supply chains. To maintain and enhance the role of recycled materials in a globalized world, ReMA focuses on several strategic areas, serving as a leader on product stewardship policies, domestic and international market access, and more.

Promoting Market Driven Solutions within Product Stewardship

Product stewardship policies that disrupt current recycling processes, such as certain extended producer responsibility (EPR) or other government mandates programs targeting already successfully recycled materials, are harmful and counterproductive. Instead, policymakers should advance policies which incentivize manufacturers to design products with recyclability in mind and to increase the use of recycled content, so long as it doesn't compromise the recyclability of the product. ReMA endorses a market-driven approach to influence product design, aiming to minimize or eliminate hazardous and other non-recyclable materials that impede the recyclability process.

Encouraging and Maintaining Global Market Access

In a world that is increasingly interconnected, maintaining free and fair-trade policies is essential to ensure continued market access for recycled materials in the global marketplace. Some governments have recently attempted to restrict trade in recycled materials over confusion between 'what is product' and 'what is waste' amidst rising protectionism. These policies are often enacted in the name of environmentalism and have unintended consequences on the recycled materials industry broadly. ReMA continues to align ourselves with like-minded organizations and associations to address these challenges. Together, we work towards educating about the advantages of incorporating recycled materials in manufacturing, and the necessity of a free market.



Ensuring a Safe and Circular Environment in an Era of Increasing Electrification

The global movement towards electrification and decarbonization is gaining momentum and the recycled materials industry has a pivotal role in it, supplying high-quality renewable resources to manufacturers and helping support a more resilient and sustainable planet in the process. This support is vital for achieving sustainability goals, as the recycling of materials is generally less energy and carbon intensive compared to the extraction and processing of new resources. However, the era of technological advancement brings its own sets of challenges including issues in demand, supply chain logistics, and the safe handling of materials—particularly in the context of battery recycling and reuse. ReMA is positioning itself as a key player in policy discussions and decisions related to the challenges and opportunities of electrification and decarbonization.

Batteries and Critical Mineral Circularity

As the reliance on batteries grows, powering everything from smartphones to electric vehicles, the market is experiencing a historic period of growth. ReMA is dedicated to being an integral part of policy discussions and exploring solutions which ensure the safe and efficient recycling of these batteries. The aim is to establish a circular economy for critical minerals, where resources are reused and recycled, reducing the need for new mining and processing.

Addressing Unintended Safety Consequences of Electrification

The surge in electrification and the widespread use of batteries go hand in hand, necessitating the development of safety measures and associated risk management strategies. Proper labeling, handling, and processing of batteries or batteries containing items is essential to prevent accidents and ensure the safety of workers and communities. ReMA is dedicated to developing and advocating for guidelines and best practices in battery recycling, including addressing the technical and logistical challenges of collecting, sorting and safely processing battery containing products to minimize both fire risks and environmental impacts, ensuring that electrification progresses in a way that is safe for both people and the planet.



Promoting Safe and Responsible Recycling Operations

The rise in commodity prices has led to an increase in metal theft, a problem that extends beyond a mere inconvenience. Metal theft disrupts communities, poses safety risks, and incurs significant costs for both the public and affected businesses. For example, copper theft can not only comprise the functioning of telecommunications systems, but can also lead to service disruptions and costly repairs, and pose severe safety hazards due to exposed wires and damaged infrastructure. Those thefts are only anticipated to continue to rise as copper prices increase given the metals essentiality in electrification infrastructure.

ReMA supports strong enforceable laws aimed at effectively preventing theft and requiring steps to assist in tracking suspicious activities to aid enforcement and reduce the occurrence of these crimes, while promoting legitimate recycling operations. The recycled materials industry is committed to collaborating with policymakers, community leaders, and law enforcement to both prevent and address theft effectively based on proven strategies.

Increasing Awareness of and Deterring Catalytic Converter Theft

Catalytic Converter theft appears in headlines almost daily, and oftentimes, the media, law enforcement, and community blaming the recyclers for encouraging theft of catalytic converters by purchasing them. ReMA encourages the development of, and familiarity with effective laws governing catalytic converters, partnerships with local law enforcement to alert and raise awareness of significant thefts of materials and engaging in community events to educate the public to combat theft and safeguard both consumers and recyclers.

Restoring the Mutilated Coin Redemption Program

For nearly 100 years recyclers have recovered, processed, and collected mutilated coins which were no longer accepted as legal tender. The suspension of the U.S. Mint's Mutilated Coin Redemption Program resulted in increased financial costs for recyclers, who must continue to collect and store these coins, as well as for the U.S. Mint that must manufacture new coins for circulation. Using recycled materials in the development of new coins reduces reliance on finite ore deposits, and substantially lowers energy consumption and associated emissions—recycling and reclaiming these valuable commodities is integral to environmental sustainability and circularity. Domestic recyclers capable of verifying the legitimacy of submitted coins should be permitted to continue participating in the Program once restarted.



Shaping the Future by Advancing Education, Workforce Development, and Responsible Governance

Recyclers are deeply committed to being a proactive and responsible force within communities, operating safe recycling facilities and contributing to the well-being and growth of the neighborhoods we all live and work in. As the industry adapts to evolving expectations in corporate sustainability and Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) criteria, recyclers play a vital role in achieving national and corporate sustainability goals. Part of that commitment includes expanding educational initiatives and workforce development programs to cultivate the necessary technical skills needed for a sustainable future.

Recognizing the importance of being good neighbors, we also seek to secure a meaningful presence for recyclers at the outset of any and all policy discussions which may impact our operations. This proactive involvement is crucial to prevent unintended consequences that could impede industry operations and the opportunities we provide for current and upcoming generations.

By working collaboratively, we aim to forge a brighter, more sustainable future for all.

Providing STEM Education & Workforce Development

The importance of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education in nurturing critical thinking, engagement, and innovation is increasingly acknowledged by national and global leaders. Preparing today's youth to be tomorrow's leaders is fundamental to building a sustainable future. ReMA recognizes that the continued growth and innovation of the industry's workforce start with a robust STEM education and continue with training and reskilling throughout a career path. That is why ReMA has invested in the development of K-12 STEM-based recycling curricula and fellowship and internship opportunities, all aimed at nurturing the next generation of industry innovators and environmental stewards.

Expanding Community Development & Meaningful Engagement

Recyclers are committed to being exemplary neighbors in their communities, operating facilities that uphold environmental responsibility and safety while actively contributing to the prosperity and growth of their communities. Recyclers' presence in communities contributes to economic development via direct and indirect job creation, strengthened tax bases for local schools and services, increased access to recycling services, and more. The recycled materials industry strives to engage with our communities to achieve mutual understanding and shared goals for the success of all members of the community. It is the recycled materials industry's desire that all voices are heard, injustice is avoided or rectified, and shared objectives are achieved in ways that are beneficial for all.

Strategic Goals and Organizational Commitments

Each of the goals outlined in ReMA's 2024 Advocacy Agenda may be accomplished through a variety of means—legislative, regulatory, building upon and developing new strategic partnerships, community outreach and more. To move our Agenda forward, we have outlined a series of actions the industry will take to ensure safe, economically sustainable, and environmentally responsible recycling.

Championing Environmental Stewardship within Reasonable Regulatory Frameworks

- Advocate for legislation that recognizes the role of the recyclers as passive receivers of PFAS-containing substances, that do not engage in the design or production of materials containing these substances.
- Positively influence the development of regulations or guidance which impact the industry, including but not limited to those related to the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, or the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act.
- Educate all stakeholders on the implications of environmental regulations on the recycling industry.
- Foster collaboration among various stakeholders to find balanced solutions that address environmental concerns without hampering industry operations.

Maintaining Market Access, Development and Sustained Economic Growth

- Monitor, evaluate and respond to legislative efforts to create new or expand existing EPR programs, and ensure the recycled materials industry's interests are represented and protected against policies that may upturn current recycling processes.
- Advocate for the incorporation of Design for Recycling principles in product manufacturing, ensuring recyclability without compromising product quality or creating market disruptions.
- Highlight the impacts of restrictive, protectionist trade policies on the recycling industry and global sustainability efforts.
- Continue existing and develop new bilateral partnerships with key international stakeholders to ensure the recycled materials industry has a voice in ongoing policy development, and to protect free-market access



Ensuring a Safe and Circular Environment in an Era of Increasing Electrification

- ✓ Advocate for policies that, where possible, support a circular model for critical minerals, emphasizing the important role of recycled materials in ensuring a stable and sustainable supply chain for domestic production of batteries and other essential products needed for our economy.
- ✓ Develop and promote comprehensive standards for safe handling and processing of batteries and battery-containing products.
- ✓ Support efforts to grow and secure the domestic critical mineral supply chain, encouraging public, business, and governmental support for collection, reprocessing and recycling.
- ✓ Monitor and respond to anticipated Universal Waste Regulations for end-of-life solar panels and lithium batteries, ensuring that standards are in-line with current industry best practices.

Promoting Safe and Legal Recycling Practices

- ✓ Advocate for creation and enforcement of stronger laws proven effective for the prevention of metal theft.
- ✓ Broaden existing and establish new collaborative relationships with law enforcement and community leaders to effectively prevent and address metals theft.
- ✓ Partner with law enforcement and other stakeholders to launch a National Marking Day Program for catalytic converters.
- ✓ Collect and analyze data on metal theft occurrences to better understand trends and develop targeted prevention strategies.
- ✓ Lobby for the reinstatement of the U.S. Mint's Mutilated Coin Redemption Program with enhanced verification processes.

Shaping the Future by Advancing Education, Workforce Development, and Responsible Governance

- ✓ Elevate the voice of the industry in policy action related to greenhouse-gas reporting requirements, and workforce development, engaging with the Securities and Exchange Commission, the Department of Labor and others.
- ✓ Expand existing and foster new partnerships with K-12 educational institutions and Jason Learning to integrate STEM education related to sustainability and recycling into their curricula.
- ✓ Bolster workforce development programs that provide specific training for careers in the recycled materials industry, i.e. ReMA Sustainability Pathways Program.
- ✓ Foster meaningful engagement between the recycled materials industry and their communities, to achieve mutual understanding and identify shared goals for the success of all members of the community.



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