Recycling & China: What’s Next?
China Waste Import Restrictions

The emerging policy of:

- New waste import bans
- Stringent waste import restrictions
- Tougher enforcement at ports
- Inspections at MRFs
- Big reduction in import quotas

is making the Green Fence look like a minor issue
SWANA has been at the center of this issue since July 2017 when China issued Notifications containing a vague waste import ban with the World Trade Organization (WTO)

- Complicated issue with wide variety of stakeholders
  - Federal agencies – Commerce, USTR, EPA
  - State agencies
  - Local governments
  - Recyclers/national companies
  - Foreign governments (Canada, EU)
  - Other associations (ISRI, NWRA, AF&PA)
China Waste Restrictions

• SWANA and other stakeholders filed WTO comments in August and December 2017
  • Comments sought clarity re scope/timing & expressed concerns re feasibility of domestic markets by 1/1/18
  • Concern over contamination standard
  • Agreed with China’s interest in improving environment

• We’ve met with US Commerce Dept/USTR/Canada
  • Recycling discussed in Beijing at bilateral trade meetings
  • Recycling raised at WTO committee meetings in Switzerland
China Waste Restrictions

• SWANA met with EPA in early October as price and other impacts (import licenses) began to ripple through U.S.

• We’ve sent two letters to all 50 state environ agencies – providing update on status & focusing on potential disruption to municipal recycling programs.
  • Core messages: communicate w/ stakeholders & “quality”
  • Several states are in close/ongoing contact with us
China Waste Restrictions Update

• China finalized the waste import restrictions in early January:
  • Prohibition on imports of mixed paper & post-consumer plastic maintained (Jan 1, 2018)
  • Slight relaxation of contamination standard to 0.5% except for non-ferrous metals (1%)
    • Implementation date – March 1, 2018
  • Comments requesting a less stringent contamination standard and a longer transition period were ignored.
What Happens Next?
Impact on States

• Many state agencies are monitoring the impact of China’s new rules on state/municipal recycling programs and goals, and taking varying approaches.
  • Waste Dive 50 state survey

• States with high recycling rates that export a lot of material to China were the first ones being directly affected.
  • Oregon, Washington, Alaska
Impact on States - Oregon

DEQ has “concurred” with a dozen requests to landfill certain recyclables (only 2% of overall):

“DEQ, working closely with representatives from the recycling industry and local governments, has initiated a short-term stopgap solution to help alleviate the backup of material throughout the collection and processing system.”

http://www.oregon.gov/deq/mm/Pages/Stakeholder-Resources.aspx

DEQ is encouraging citizens to:
- Continue to recycle whenever possible
- Recycle right
- Prevent waste from the start
Local Impacts

The impact on municipal recycling programs varies widely, but we expect broader impacts if status quo of lower prices, 0.5% contamination limit, & fewer import licenses continues:

• Depends on whether you export – and where
• Depends on your contract (force majeure?)
• Depends on your contamination level
What should MRF operators be doing? It’s All About Quality…

Clean up your bales!

- Communicate with customers
- Slow down the line
- Hire more workers
  - Some MRFs having trouble finding workers
- Add new technology
  - Optical sorters/robotics
What should Local Governments be doing?

May not be best time to expand recycling programs - focus on educating residents/businesses

SWANA/KAB/EPA discussing updating this communication from 2014 – doesn’t say what not to place in the blue bin....

How much are you spending on recycling education?
Emerging Slogans/Ideas

• “When in doubt, throw it out”
• “Clean and dry”
• Beyond 34

China may jump start renewed interest in Zero Waste, Circular Economy and EPR.
RECYCLING ONLY
Deposit Only These Clean Items:

**YES**
- Clean paper, Milk Cartons, Cardboard (limit 18 x 24)
- Junk Mail, Paper Egg Cartons, Cereal Boxes
- Newspapers, Magazines, Catalogs, Phone Books
- Plastic Bottles and Jugs (no caps)
- Plastic Dairy Tubs (yogurt, margarine, etc., no lids)
- Aluminum Cans, Steel or Tin Cans
- Loose Glass Bottles and Jugs

**NO**
- No Pizza Boxes
- No Aerosol Cans
- No Hoses
- No Plants
- No Toys
- No Dishes/Paper Plates
- No Juice Boxes or Pouches
- No Tires
- No Styrofoam
- No Clothes Textiles/Carpets
- No Batteries
- No Plastic Bags
- No Electronics

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• Purchase your own bin, can, or cart from a local retailer. Or, you can use an existing one. Or more than one!

• You must use the reflective sticker pictured above on your (permanent) container. Call your trash hauler for a sticker, or call the County Recycling Office.

• Only use the sticker on a permanent container (no laundry baskets or cardboard boxes or temporary containers, please)

• Place your recycling at the curb the night before your recycling day.
What Can I Recycle?

No need to separate your items, they can all go into the same container!

Yes please!
- Aluminum & Steel Cans
- Newspapers & Magazines
- Office Paper
- Glass bottles & Jars
- Plastic Bottles, Cups & Jugs
- Envelopes & Junk Mail
- *including the ones with clear windows!
- Cardboard

No thanks!
- Styrofoam
- Plastic Bags
- Candy Wrappers
- Juice & Milk Cartons
- Medical Sharps
- Lightbulbs & Electronics
- *note: recycle at Leon County Household Hazardous Waste!

Leon County Office of Resource Stewardship
(850) 606-1800
www.LeonCountyFL.gov/Recycling
Working Together for a GREENER Key West!

RECYCLE IN CART
- Paper, Cardboard, Magazines,
- Junk Mail, Newspaper
- Glass Bottles & Jars
- Plastic Bottles & Containers
- Steel & Aluminum Cans
- Aluminum Foil
- Milk & Juice Cartons

DO NOT RECYCLE IN CART
- No Plastic Bags
- No Food
- No Hoses
- No Heavy Items
- No Ropes
- No Electronics
- No Mirrors
- No Chemicals
- No Dishes
- No Styrofoam

FOR PROGRAM INFORMATION, CONCERNS WITH SOLID WASTE SERVICES, OR TO BOOK A PRESENTATION, CONTACT:
CITY OF KEY WEST
305-809-3776
dgreen@cityofkeywest-fl.gov

KeyWestRecycles.com

WASTE MANAGEMENT CUSTOMER SERVICE
305-296-8297

CALL TO SCHEDULE BULKY WASTE PICKUP, REPORT A MISSED PICKUP AND ALL OTHER SERVICE REQUESTS

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SWANA’s Advice

Floridians’ need to take the following steps:

- **Communicate** with all stakeholders/elected officials about the current disruption in global recycling markets
- **Educate** all stakeholders re need to generate high quality material
- **Renew** waste reduction efforts
- **Consider** alternate markets – SE Asia/Latin America
- **Review** current & future recycling goals/regulations
The Goal:
Thank you!

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