

Lithium-Ion Batteries Talking Points for ISRI Members

THE ASK: Include the recycled materials industry in all conversations related to policy and consumer education surrounding lithium-ion batteries to maintain a safe and stable manufacturing supply chain.

Topline Message

- Batteries have become pervasive within manufactured products – from small “button” batteries to large format electric vehicle (EV) batteries. The public must be educated about the safety risks these batteries can pose during their use as well as the fire risks when devices and products containing these batteries are wrongfully placed into the recycling stream.
- The recycled materials industry recycles upwards of 17 million automobiles annually, and produces the recycled steel, copper, and aluminum needed for both domestic and global manufacturers – ***and must be part of any policy discussions occurring around EVs.***
- There is bipartisan federal support for the U.S. to transition to a decarbonized economy and the recycled materials industry has an integral role in providing the high-quality materials to achieve this goal. Thus, the industry must be a part of any related policy discussions and decisions to maintain a safe and stable manufacturing supply chain.

Why it Matters:

- Policy makers and other stakeholders are engaged in discussions to make decisions that will impact the recycled materials industry and its operations.
- It is critical that we are part of these discussions so we can offer expertise and also make any needed adjustments to processes and technologies for handling these batteries and vehicles.
- When batteries are improperly managed they may self-ignite and pose serious dangers.
- Small button batteries can pose serious health risks if swallowed by children – visits to ERs due to batteries being swallowed have doubled in the last decade.

State of Play:

- Most consumers are not aware of the potential dangers when batteries are improperly managed in their homes or end up in the recycling system.
- ISRI is partnering with stakeholders - including the automotive industry, the steel industry, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), EV battery recyclers and others - as well as federal and state policy makers - to raise awareness of the expertise and significant role of the recycled materials industry and to help develop a comprehensive national strategy for managing batteries and EVs.
- ISRI in partnership with industry experts created a High Voltage Electric Vehicle Technology Training Course to teach recyclers and first responders how to safely handle EV batteries.

Political Situation:

- Lawmakers are becoming more aware of the need for increased consumer awareness of the safety and fire risks of lithium-ion batteries.
- In 2023, California and New Jersey have active legislation to create Extended Producer Responsibility programs for EV batteries, and Washington passed an EPR program for consumer batteries that includes a requirement to study EV batteries for policy in upcoming sessions.