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Voice of the Recycling Industry

Institute of
Scrap Recycling
Industries, Inc.

The Experience of the Recycling Industry in the US with Producer Responsibility

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ISRI's Policy on Producer Responsibility

- Support policies that promote a ...
 - competitive,
 - market-based system
 - that assures the free & fair trade of recyclables
- In addition,
 - the existing recycling infrastructure must be given an equal opportunity to participate in any program developed, and
 - Producer responsibility programs should not include recyclables that are manufactured into commodity grade products and sold into viable markets

Limited Exceptions

- ISRI's policy does allow holding producers responsible in certain limited circumstances without subsidies, but in such instances there must be a sunset provision for when market forces can take over
- Two Instances –
 - Mercury switches in convenience lights
 - 2001: ISRI advocated for states to require automakers to subsidize Hg switch removal
 - Only way to ultimately force auto manufacturers to eliminate use of Hg
 - 2006: Federal MOU (sunsets in 2017)
 - Household electronics
 - 2005, ISRI supported limited-short term use of PR to recycle certain household electronic devices that had a negative value to process until market could sustain itself

> 32 States with EPR-Type Laws

- Drivers

- Reduce costs to local/state governments
- Focus of NGOs on consumer products
- Retailers fixation on packaging & sustainability



> 32 States with EPR-Type Laws

- Focus of State EPR Laws to Date ...
 - Used tires
 - Hg-containing products
 - Used & EOL electronics (including batteries)
 - Used carpet
 - Unused paints
 - “Sharpies” (hypodermic needles)
- Rationale Used: incentivizes manufacturers to change the design of their products in order to hold down their costs

Risks/Potential Issues Raised

- Although DFR[®] incentive tempting to the recycling community, but there are risks
 - Potential for overreach into recyclables that have a positive value & existing market on place
 - example: Vermont attempt to require EPR for all packaging & printed material
 - Flow control
 - Redistribution of market share
 - CBI
 - Government ends up picking market winners and losers

Current Attempts at EPR

- California – exploring incentive vs. EPR for tires
 - ISRI prefers incentive based program for firms involved in recycling to help them grow
 - There are currently no EPR programs for tires in the US
- Electronics
 - 25 states with e-recycling laws; all but CA follow EPR-type model
 - ISRI supports EPR *as needed* for selected electronics, until markets established (likely within 3-5 years, when most of the CRT glass is out of the stream)
- Concerning trend towards Generic EPR frameworks in states that allow products to be added by regulatory agencies
- Private initiatives at producer responsibility
 - Starbucks
 - Nestle

Questions?

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