

Recycling & China



SWANA - Background

- **SWANA is the largest waste association in North America with 9,300+ members**
 - Members/chapters in United States and Canada
 - Public sector and private sector
 - Our core purpose is to “advance the responsible management of solid waste as a resource.”



China Waste Ban Update

- **SWANA and other stakeholders filed WTO comments in late August**
 - Comments sought clarity re scope/timing & expressed concerns re feasibility of domestic markets by 1/1/18.
 - SWANA encouraged the Recycling Partnership and others to file comments to increase and broaden the number of voices raising concerns.

- **Stakeholders met with US Commerce Dept/USTR in September**
 - Commerce/USTR raised issue in Beijing in late September at bi-lateral trade meeting – questions submitted to MEP.



China Waste Ban Update

- **SWANA met with EPA in early October as price and other impacts began to ripple through U.S.**
- **We sent an October 11 letter to all 50 state environmental agencies – info update & focused on potential disruption to municipal recycling programs.**
- **SWANA is facilitating the flow of information to the lead federal agencies addressing this issue.**



Impact on States

- **State agencies are monitoring the impact of China's new rules on state/municipal recycling programs and goals, and taking varying approaches.**
- **States with high recycling rates that export a lot of material to China are the first ones being directly affected.**

Impact on States - Oregon

- **Oregon DEQ published FAQ's re proposed ban and impact on recycling**

“DEQ and its partners are preparing for different possibilities and developing strategies to maintain recycling collection and processing where possible....”

Oregon DEQ encouraging citizens to:

- **Continue to recycle whenever possible**
- **Recycle right**
- **Prevent waste from the start**



Impact on States - Wash

“China ban unlikely to affect region; Peninsula officials say contamination low in recycled items”

Peninsula Daily News (10/20)

“Zero Waste Vashon holds forum amid China ban on foreign waste”

Vashon Beachcomber (10/17)

“Chinese Ban Sends San Juan Recyclables to Landfill”

San Juan Journal (10/19)

**Wash Dept of Ecology: Recyclables need to be clean/dry
Know the (changing) local rules
When in doubt, throw it out**



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Local Impacts

The impact on municipal recycling programs thus far is limited, but that is likely to change if status quo of lower prices, 0.3% contamination limit, & no/fewer import licenses continues

- Depends on whether you export – and where**
- Depends on your contract (force majeure?)**
- Depends on your contamination level**



Local Impacts

- **Madison, WI** – Not accepting “rigid” plastics at dropoff
- **Lane County, OR** – Not accepting plastics at dropoff
- **Seattle, WA & Eugene, OR** – Haulers asking for ok to dispose mixed plastics (3-7) collected curbside



What should MRF operators be doing?

It's About Quality!

Clean up your bales:

- **Slow down the line**
- **Hire more workers**
 - Some MRFs having trouble finding workers...
- **Add new technology**
 - Optical sorters/robotics



SWANA's Advice

Everyone should take a deep breath

- **Communicate with all stakeholders/elected officials about the current disruption in the global recycling markets**
- **Educate all stakeholders re need to generate high quality material**
- **Renew waste reduction efforts**
- **Consider alternate markets**
- **Review current & future recycling goals/regs**



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Thank you!

QUESTIONS???

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