



News Release

For Immediate Release

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Contact: Allyson Wilson (202) 249-6619

Email: allyson_wilson@americanchemistry.com

RESEARCH PROGRAM ANNOUNCES FLEXIBLE PACKAGING RECYCLING PILOT, SEEKS MRF PARTNER

WASHINGTON (March 16, 2017) — The [Materials Recovery for the Future](#) (MRFF) research program today announced plans to partner with a U.S. material recovery facility (MRF) and the community(s) it serves to pilot curbside recycling of flexible packaging. MRFF is offering technical assistance and financial stewardship to help upgrade the U.S. MRF that participates in the pilot.

The research program is seeking a partner facility for the pilot that processes at least 20 tons per hour and [meets other essential criteria](#). Interested communities or managers of MRFs that meet these criteria should contact Susan Graff, Vice President, Resource Recycling Systems (sgraff@recycle.com) before April 7, 2017.

To assist the collective decision to enter into a pilot partnership, RRS developed an economic feasibility model for adding flexible packaging to a MRF's sorting capabilities. The model provides customized outputs that assess the costs and benefits associated with adding flexible packaging to single-stream recycling systems in a pro forma format.

“With this pilot, we aim to demonstrate the potential to capture flexible film packaging and use the material as a feedstock for U.S. manufacturing while improving the quality of other recycling streams processed at MRFs,” said Stephen Sikra, section head, Global Research and Development, The Procter and Gamble Company.

Flexible packaging is currently present in MRF infeed from curbside collection, but MRFs typically pay to ship the material to a landfill rather than recover it for energy production or remanufacture. The use of flexible packaging is projected to grow because its consumer benefits and affordability are widely recognized, so collection and recycling strategies are critical.

Additionally, participating in this new pilot is expected to benefit our MRF partner by improving the quality of paper products through the removal of unintended flexible packaging. “Flexible packaging is often disposed of as a contaminant of paper products. MRFs were not originally designed to sort this light weight format into a high quality product. The members of Materials Recovery for the Future—manufacturers, brands, retailers, and recyclers—are actively working to

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March 16, 2017

Page 2

pilot a system that helps the recycling industry develop a new flexible product and better serve consumer demand for recycling,” said Susan Graff, RRS vice president and MRFF project director.

The MRF flexible packaging pro forma will vary by location depending on the availability of local end markets as well as the quality of sortation. To further improve the value proposition for those factors, RRS is conducting advanced optical sorter testing with equipment manufacturers, as well as a commodity end-use market assessment with a goal of describing product bale specifications for the Association of Plastic Recyclers.

“The intent of the pilot is to help communities that want to recover potentially valuable materials instead of landfilling them and partner with innovators in the MRF industry to recycle this material,” said Jeff Wooster, global sustainability director for Dow Packaging and Specialty Plastics and MRFF chairperson. “Dow is committed to working in partnership with communities and industry to recycle all their packaging, and this pilot will be a major step towards making this a reality.”

The MRFF project members include [Amcor](#), [The Dow Chemical Company](#), [LyondellBasell Industries](#), [Nestlé Purina PetCare](#) and [Nestlé USA](#), [PepsiCo](#), [Plum Organics](#), [Procter & Gamble](#), [SC Johnson](#), [Sealed Air](#), and [Target](#) as well as the [Association of Plastics Recyclers](#), [Flexible Packaging Association](#), [The Plastics Industry Association](#), and the [American Chemistry Council](#).

For more information about the pilot or to learn how your company can join Materials Recovery for the Future, please contact Sarah Lindsay at sarah_lindsay@americanchemistry.com.

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[Materials Recovery for the Future](#) is an initiative of the Foundation for Chemistry Research and Initiatives, a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization established by the [American Chemistry Council](#).

