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New Resources from the Sustainable Packaging Coalition to Facilitate Recycling

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Written for RILA (Retail Industry Leaders Association)

Retailers recognize the value of waste minimization and recycling and continue to focus on these efforts as they relate to both in-store operations and private label product packaging. While success is often inhibited by a lack of infrastructure for both recycling and composting, recycling of plastic films through alternative recovery methods has emerged as a key retailer opportunity.

Specifically, polyethylene (HDPE #2 and LDPE #4) bags, wraps, and films—materials found in nearly every business and household, including drink case wrap, bread bags, paper product wrap, and many others—enjoy a growing recovery market. Retailers are able to collect and sell this commodity, in many cases taking advantage of reverse distribution logistics while at the same time providing a valuable service to customers who increasingly are aware of retailer plastic bag take-back programs.

While some municipalities are implementing carryout bag bans, retailers still must manage back-of-house material such as plastic pallet wrap. In addition, though plastic shopping bags may no longer be available, customers leave the store with products wrapped in plastic film material that can easily be recycled.

GreenBlue's Sustainable Packaging Coalition has partnered with the American Chemistry Council's Flexible Film Recycling Group to provide the retail community with resources and opportunities aimed to make it easier for retailers to be a part of the solution for recycling this valuable material. These include:

Financial sponsorships to become a participant in the SPC's *How2Recycle Label* program, specifically to use the "Store Drop-off" version of the label on carry-out and other plastic film material. This label currently appears on all Seventh Generation film packages, Kellogg cereal products (including Kashi brand), and Sealed Air's Fill-Air® inflatable packaging. Learn more [here](#).

A free, downloadable poster for use with front-of-store recycling bins. This poster teaches customers what is recyclable in this stream using package types, not confusing Resin Identification Codes (the "plastic numbers"). Learn more [here](#).

Listing of retail locations in the on-line Drop-Off Directory at www.plasticfilmrecycling.org. Join other RILA members such as Target, Home Depot, and JCPenney and get listed!

Technical assistance to help navigate the issues around program implementation. We look forward to answering your questions. You can send your questions [here](#).

Guidance on recycling rigid plastic containers at: www.recyclegroceryplastics.org. This related initiative helps retailers figure out how to best recycle the types of plastic containers often used for back-of-house operations.

We have also developed a partnership with the State of Wisconsin's Department of Natural Resources to increase plastic film recycling beyond bags in that state. The team will select a metropolitan area in Wisconsin to conduct a consumer awareness campaign as a key piece of this initiative, and will make the selection largely based on retailer interest. Please contact Anne Bedarf for further information on getting involved in Wisconsin.

The How2Recycle Label Program is also applicable to all private label product packaging. For more information and to get involved, please contact Anne Bedarf at: Anne.Bedarf@greenblue.org; 434-817-1424, ext. 314.