

**State of Connecticut
Department of Environmental Protection**

**State Solid Waste Management Advisory Committee
Summary of the January 22, 2008 Meeting**



Changing the Balance

The ninth meeting of the CTDEP State Solid Waste Management Advisory Committee was held on January 22, 2008 at the CTDEP headquarters. The purpose of the meeting was to: learn about the recycling and reuse of post-consumer carpets; provide regulatory and legislative updates; and discuss the 2008 Advisory Committee meeting schedule and lecture topics; and then, breakout to subcommittee work.

Guest Lecture: *Recycling and Reuse of Post-Consumer Carpet*

Two guest speakers made presentations to the Committee: Richard Furst, bkm Sales Manager-Floorcovering and John Powers, Co-founder and Treasurer of ReCONNstruction Center.

Richard Furst: BKM Enterprises, Inc. d/b/a bkm Total Office was founded in Connecticut in 1933 and incorporated in 1981. bkm Total Office is a nationally recognized leader in providing "total office solutions" to customers. Bkm's primary market consists of Connecticut and Westchester County, NY. Mr. Furst focused his comments to his Floorcovering Division. bkm Total Office is a full service flooring contractor recently recognized as one of the 25 largest flooring companies in America in 2006. Customers include many universities and major corporations in Connecticut and the Tri-State area. Flooring products include: carpet tiles, broadloom, wood or ceramic floors. bkm offers a recycling program for the old carpet. Some fibers will be recycled in a "closed loop" process that transforms used carpet fibers into brand new nylon carpet yarn. Other fibers and backings will be recycled for use in new consumer and industrial parts, or converted from waste to energy. Carpet recycling contributes to the LEED rating earned in renovation projects.

Mr. Furst described the types of carpet fibers: nylon type 66 (2 polymer) and type 6 (1 polymer). There are more premium carpets but these types of carpets are more difficult to breakdown for recycling. The focus of post-consumer carpets recycling is type 6. There are two parts to a carpet tile – the material (fiber) and the backing. Some carpet tile includes PVC backing; this is considered by some in the industry to be the best backing for longevity and ease to install the product. The product can be ground down to produce make backing. Mr. Furst described Shaw Floors as an excellent example of a company working on innovative ways of reducing waste, improving manufacturing processes, and preserving natural resources. Shaw changed from PVC to eco*worx backing and created a cradle to cradle backing system made from thermoplastic polyolefin compound with a reinforcing layer. It is 100% recyclable and is Cradle to Cradle Silver Certified Product, in addition to other benefits of the design. At this point in time, Shaw cannot get enough back of this product for recycling. There is currently lots of pressure to make more environmentally favorable products; chief among the concerns is the cost of freight transport and the weight of the product. Other large carpet manufacturers are similarly designing with more focus on sustainability and have developed similar type of backing. The carpet tiles in newly opened Cabella's in East Hartford are 100% recycled.

Interface has made carpets from bio-based fibers derived from agricultural products such as corn, rice and beets. The starch portion these crops is converted into sugar and fermented to produce lactic acid, which is then processed and polymerized to form polyactic acid (PLA). PLA polymers

are then spun into fiber, and can be used for common consumer items such as clothing, cups, food containers, and contract fabrics and carpets. (Source: Interface).

BKM brings used carpets to Connecticut Recycling Works in East Hartford for collection, baling and distribution. At this time, the cost to recycle is more than a disposal cost but the cost is coming down. However, there are clients who want to recycle the carpet and will pay more to do so; there are some benefits to do so, specifically when trying one is trying to achieve green design/construction recognition. Also, another factor in managing some post-consumer carpet is the fact that landfilling is not a preferred management approach (the great amount of carpet being disposed and it not being biodegradable) and that acceptance of this type of material at landfills may prove more difficult in the future. In addition, carpets containing recyclable fibers like nylon can be used for consumer products or energy, and there are recyclers and markets for this waste material.

John Powers: The ReCONNstruction Center is located at 230 South Street in New Britain, Connecticut and is a non-profit organization. The Center is a 6,580 square-foot showroom and warehouse store that offers for sale good quality, pre-owned or surplus, reusable building materials. The name ReCONNstruction stands for: “re” – reuse and recycle; CONN – abbreviation for the State; and “reconstruct” – to construct again. Types of items for sale include building materials, windows, doors, bathroom fixtures, kitchen cabinets, flooring, electrical, HVAC, plumbing, wall coverings and miscellaneous items. All items are sold at affordable cost. Carpet (new only, 10’ x 12’ minimum) is available for sale. Just recently, the ReCONNstruction Center was able to sell 6,400 square yards of carpet; the carpet tile that had an original price in the mid-\$20/sqyd, was sold for \$4/sqyd. There are many similar opportunities to take advantage of at the store and the public can call 860-597-3390 to find out more or check the website at: www.reconnstructioncenter.org

For more information about Recycling and Reuse of Post-Consumer Carpet, a good website to visit is the CarpetAmericaRecoveryEffort (CARE) website. CARE is a joint industry-government effort to increase the amount of recycling and reuse of post-consumer carpet and reduce the amount of carpet going into landfills. The website is: <http://www.carpetrecovery.org/>

Discussion: There was some discussion expressed by the private sector and recyclers that the State needs to: be more engaged and provide incentives to those in the recycling business to operate and for those wanting to recycle post-consumer carpets; require state contracting be more aware with regard to purchasing and disposal contract awards with regard to products in the marketplace; review tax policies with regard to recyclables; and appropriate waivers and grants for the recycling business sector. More awareness needs to be made about CARE and the ability to recycle carpets. The newly released DEP General Permit for Municipal Transfer Stations does allow the municipalities to collect post-consumer carpet and there may be opportunity here to raise awareness. Carpet could be a good product stewardship model effort.

Legislative and Regulatory Updates

Robert Isner, Director/Bureau of Materials Management and Compliance Assurance, provided an update with regard to the electronics waste law (public notice end of February/early March), the Beneficial Re-Use of Coal Ash into concrete products was being drafted; and the Beneficial Re-Use of Contaminated Soils continues to be discussed at stakeholder meetings with the expectations of a late spring or early summer public notice. CTDEP’s legislative package was not released, pending OPM approval to the Agency. Once this package has been approved, an email will go out to the Advisory Committee members.

Open Forum

Tessa Gutowski outlined the Advisory Committee revised operational procedures and revised meeting schedule for the year 2008. Based on previous comments by the Committee, more time will be allocated during the full committee meeting portion of the agenda. This time period will now run from 9:30 am to 10:45 am to allow for more discussion. Subcommittees will meet immediately after the 10:45 adjournment of the Full Committee. The meetings are scheduled for the fourth Tuesday of the following months:

- February 26th
- March 25th
- April 22nd
- May 27th
- June 24th
- September 23rd
- October 28th;
- November 25th

Changes reflecting these revisions will be made to the write-up on the Roles and Responsibility for the Advisory Committee and will be posted to the Advisory Committee website.

Committee members were asked what topics were of interest to the group and the following items were brought forward at this meeting, as well as subsequent calls made to Gutowski after the January meeting:

- Single Stream
- Role of the private sector - waste haulers, recyclers, waste management companies
- Recycling – City of Hartford’s new initiative; school recycling; C&D waste recycling; recycling motivators; business and industry.
- Implementation of Connecticut’s Electronic Waste Law
- Organics
- CRRA
- RRF – Public to Private
- Recycling enforcement on state and local levels
- Packaging

The Full Committee meeting ended and the Sub-Committees (Recycling; Organics; and Statute and Regulatory Reforms) subsequently met.

The next meeting is scheduled for: February 26, 2008, 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.; CTDEP Headquarters, 79 Elm Street/5th Floor Phoenix Auditorium, Hartford, CT 06106.

Adjourned

Summary of minutes dated February 7, 2008.