



# Increasing Plastics Foodservice Packaging Recovery: Our Story

*November 6, 2014*

*NERC's 2014 Fall Conference*





## About the Author: FPI

2

- Established in 1933
- Only industry trade association in North America solely focused on all single-use foodservice packaging products
- Members include:
  - Converters and their raw material and machinery suppliers (represents about 85% of the industry);
  - Foodservice distributors and operators





# About the Subject: FSP

3

- Includes a wide variety of products, made from a variety of materials, used in a variety of places
- A small part of the overall waste stream but a very visible part of today's society
  - Less than 2% of MSW (according to EPA)
  - ~5% of total litter, but ~20% of "visible" litter (according to KAB)





# Prologue

4

- Acknowledged that most FSP was not being recovered after use for a variety of reasons...
  - Limited infrastructure and end markets
  - Real and perceived barriers
  - Cost of recovery versus value of recovered material
  - Consumer perceptions of, engagement with and access to foodservice packaging recovery
- Greater interest in “sustainability” and recovery
- Increased legislative pressures on packaging





# The Plot

5

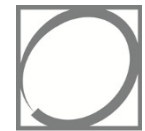
- Work collaboratively to create solutions for the recovery and processing of used foodservice packaging
- Show that voluntary, industry-based recovery initiatives work...and that new government-mandated solutions are not needed
- ...All under FPI's Paper Recovery Alliance (PRA) and Plastics Recovery Group (PRG)





# PRA & PRG Member Companies

6



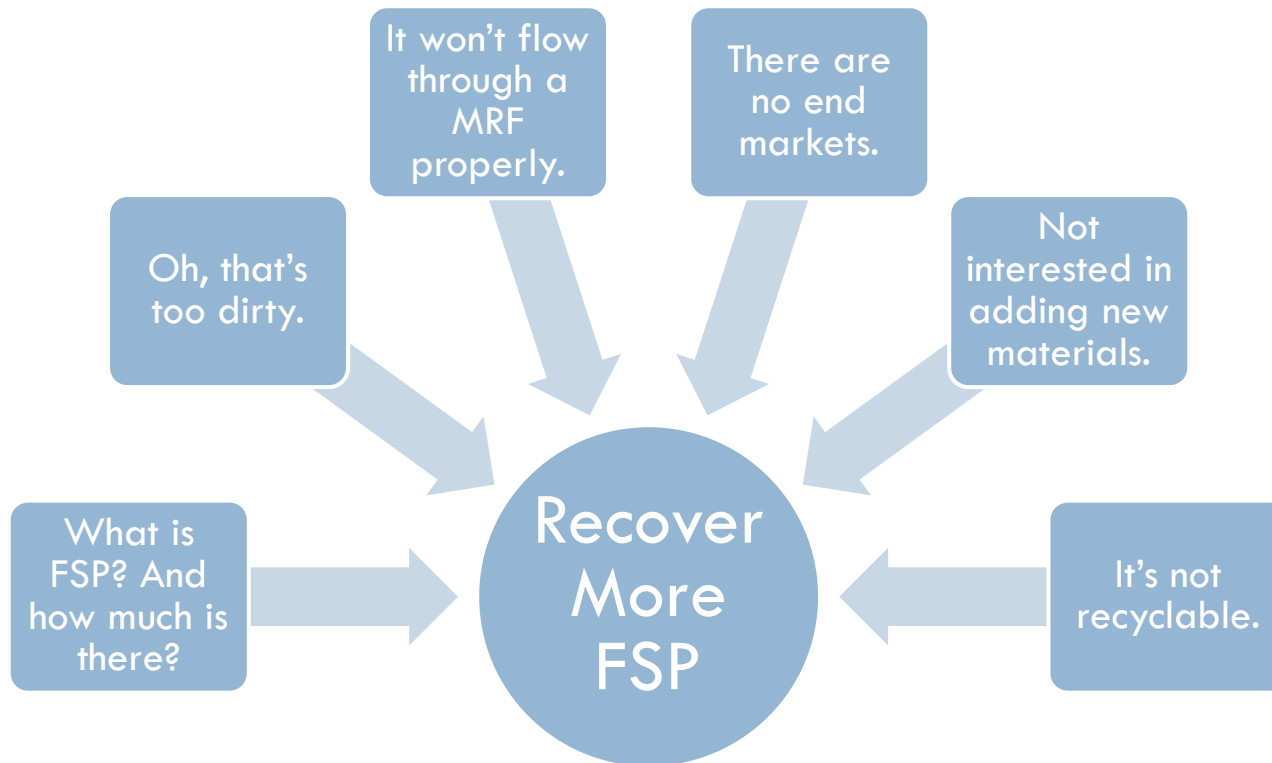
INTERNATIONAL PACKAGING GROUP





# The Outline

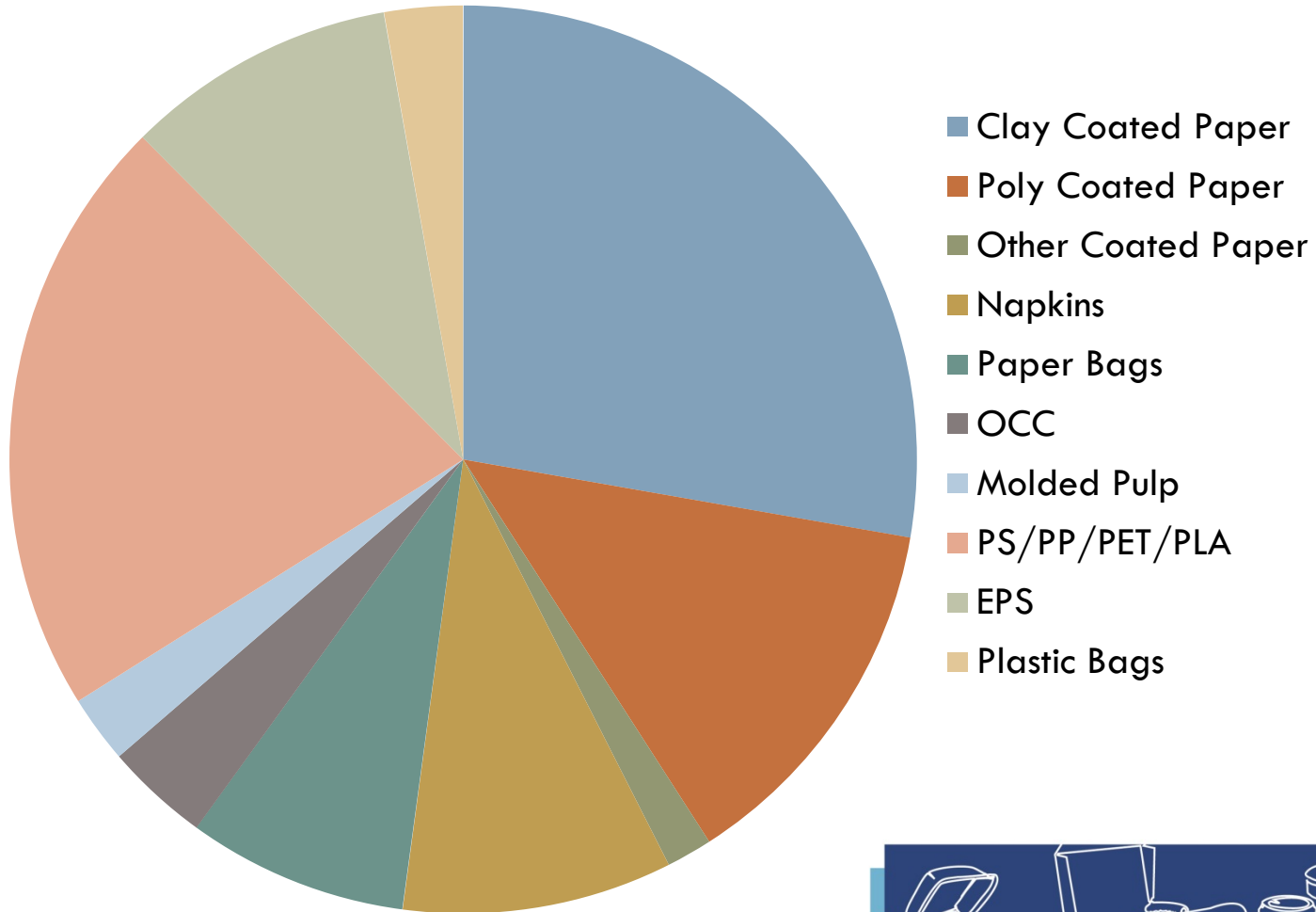
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# Ch. 1: Understanding FSP

8



Total: ~5.5 million tons in U.S.







## Ch. 2: Food Contamination

9

- **Question:** How does FSP collected at curbside compare to other commonly recycled food contact packaging?
- **Answer:**
  - 2013 study in Boston: No appreciable difference in the amount of residue on FSP and food contact packaging (but samples were exceptionally clean)
  - 2014 study in Delaware: FSP had only marginally more residue than other food contact packaging (but samples were exceptionally dirty)
- **BUT:** Understand that increased food contamination is issue for all packaging





## Ch. 3: Behavior & Fate in a MRF

10

- *Question:* Does FSP flow in a MRF to appropriate bales?
- *Answer:* 2013-2014 MRF study
  - Project Sponsors: ACC, APR, Carton Council, FPI, NAPCOR
  - Project Partners: RRS, Reclay StewardEdge, Moore Recycling
  - Target: 5 MRFs with range of sizes, geography, input and sorting technologies
  - Results: Coming soon!

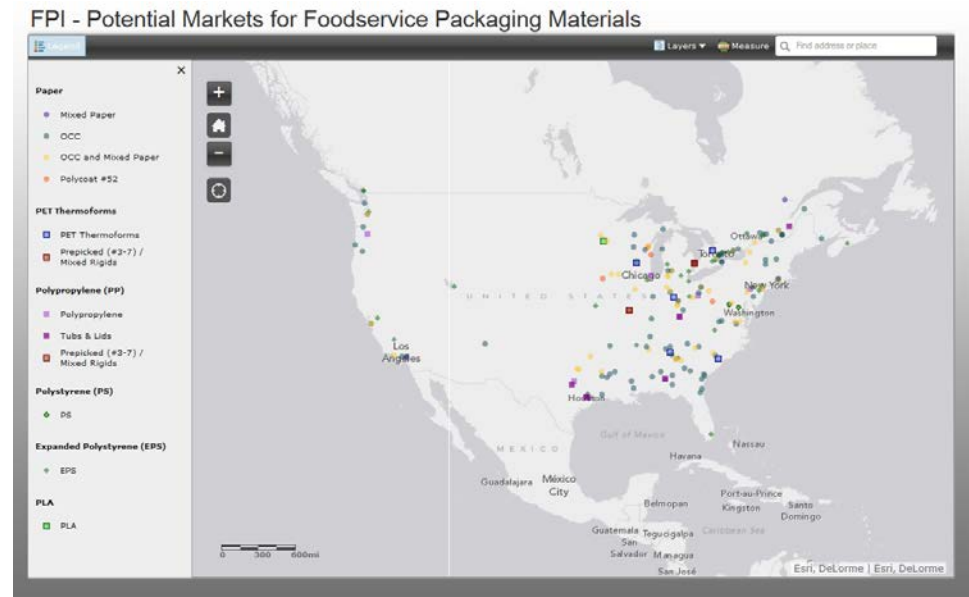




# Ch. 4: End Markets

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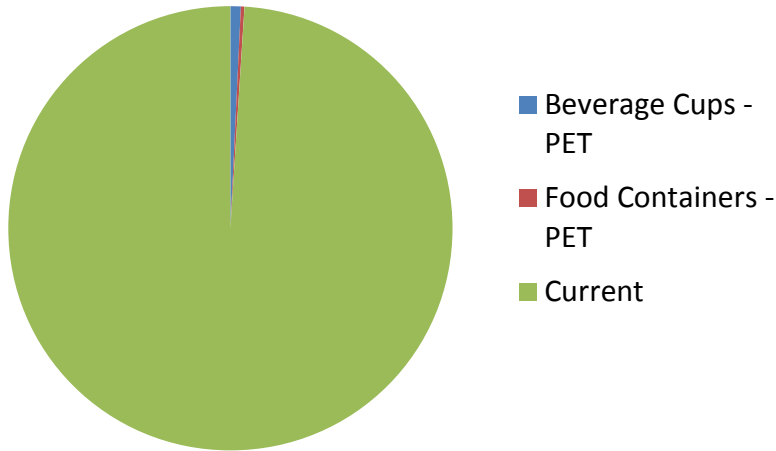
- **Question:** Are there end markets for recovered FSP materials?
- **Answer:** Yes!
  - Researched potential markets
  - Determined impacts on existing bales



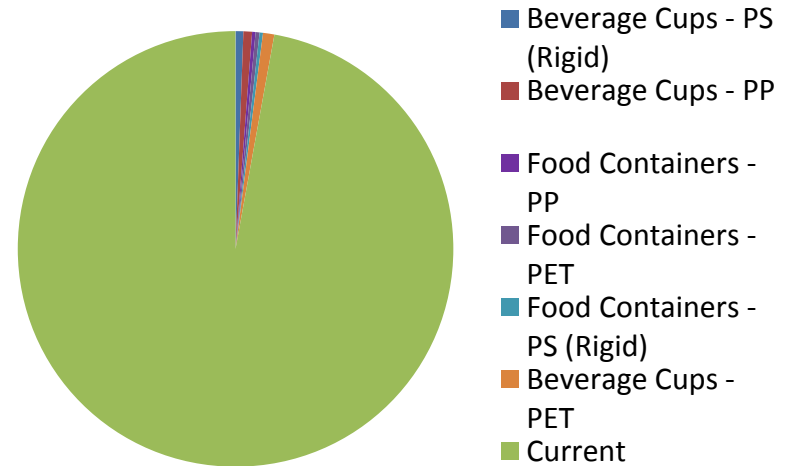


# Ch. 4: End Markets (con't)

### Adding FSP to PET Bottle Bale\*



### Adding FSP to Mixed Plastics Bale\*



\*at 10% recovery rate





## Ch. 5: Interest in New Materials

13

- **Question:** Is there interest in accepting new materials?
- **Answer:** Let's hope so!
  - Reality is that new, valuable materials are entering the recycling stream
  - Helps public officials reach environmental goals
  - Helps with changing waste stream and increase supply for MRFs and end markets
  - Growing interest in and use of recycled materials
  - Makes good business sense, if done responsibly





## Ch. 6: It's "not recyclable"

14

- *Question:* Is FSP recyclable?
- *Answer:* 2013 Benchmarking Study of nearly 70 MRFs in U.S. and Canada
  - FSP is recycled in numerous communities
  - Many cities collect some FSP materials, even if they do not promote this to their residents
  - On average, the MRFs in the study accepted 7 of the 19 FSP types
    - Cup sleeves, pizza boxes and paper carryout bags were most widely accepted FSP items, followed by rigid plastic FSP items





## Epilogue: FRC

15

- October 2014: Foam Recycling Coalition launched to address recovery needs specific to foam FSP
- Conducted study on end markets for recycled EPS (Yes, there are markets!)
- Establishing grant award for public and private entities in early 2015 to recycle EPS in residential curbside programs





# The Library

16

- [www.fpi.org/stewardship](http://www.fpi.org/stewardship) - information on the PRA, PRG and FRC, overviews of reports, webinars
- [www.fpi.org/recovery](http://www.fpi.org/recovery) - Foodservice Packaging Recovery Toolkit, including specific resources for communities, material recovery facilities and end markets







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