

Illinois Statewide Recycling Needs Assessment Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

Monday, June 8, 2026, 12:00 pm CT

WebEx Webinar

1. Welcome: Roll Call

- a.** Attendees: John Pausma, Tomas Vujovic, Pete Varney, Nicole Willett, Mark Weintraub, Mike DiMucci, Adam Spaulding, Teresa Kernc, Brad Cole, Christina Seibert, Cole Stollard, Alec Laird, Seema Keshav, Frank Pettis, Donovan Griffith, Elizabeth Sheaffer, Madeline Norris, Carol Patterson, Machele Henderson, Patricia Bonaguro
- b.** Not in attendance: Aaron Harmon, Lisa Disbrow, Joshua Connell, Becky Tracy, Andrea Densham, Darnell Tingle, Taylor Loeber
- c.** A quorum was present.
- d.** Illinois EPA staff attending: Vishnu Srinivasaraghavan, Cassandra Clark, Jacki Cooperider
- e.** Guests attending: Mike Smaha (Can Manufacturers Institute)
- f.** Open seats on the Advisory Council include one representative of each: a county with a population of 50,000-1,000,000, a municipality with a population less than 1,000,000, and a retailer.

2. Meeting Minutes

- a.** May 11 meeting minutes were reviewed. Motion by Brad Cole, second by Machele Henderson; all in favor, minutes were approved.

3. Illinois EPA Updates

- a.** Eunomia is finalizing the draft report.
- b.** IEPA is confirming how the report will be posted and shared for the public.

4. Consideration for Packaging EPR Policy by Material Type

- a.** A presentation from Mike Smaha (Can Manufacturers Institute) and Patricia Bonaguro (Crown Holdings) was provided, addressing metal food and beverage cans. The presentation included:
 - i.** Introduction to the Can Manufacturers Institute and its industry representation with focus on Illinois members and operations
 - ii.** Introduction to Crown Holdings, including its global operations by geography and by product, its sustainability targets and progress, and its recycling goals (with US recycling goal the lowest across all regions)
 - iii.** Comparison of US recycling rates, recycled content, and circularity for metal cans, glass bottles, and plastic bottles, showing metal can recycling is higher than other materials (but noted to be the lowest it has been in decades), contains more than 70% recycled content, and has the highest

- circularity rate of the materials (infinitely recyclable, saving energy and reduce resource extraction)
- iv. Metal can recycling rates in Illinois and the US, with about 22% of aluminum and steel cans recycled in Illinois compared to 43% and 58% respectively across the US
 - v. Aluminum can recycling goals of 70% by 2030 and 90% by 2050 – interested in policies to increase recycling rates
 - vi. Steel can recyclability, noting that only about 20% of tinplate can sheet for food and aerosol products is produced in the US and that there is a limit of 30% scrap steel that can be used in production because of basic oxygen furnace technical limitations (important for PCR discussion)
 - vii. Aerosol can recycling is limited but have a goal of 85% curbside acceptability by 2030; California, Colorado, and Maine include them on their accepted materials lists for EPR programs
 - viii. Policy solutions to increase metal can recycling, including:
 - EPR – moved from neutral/opposed toward support for “good” policy including fee setting that favors metal cans, eco-modulation that recognizes sustainability, and option for beverage containers to be handled through a recycling refund / deposit system; oppose legislation that includes “toxics in packaging” prohibitions, excludes certain commodities (e.g., paper), gives special treatment to reuse or refill, mandates PCR content without considering technical viability, subsidizes materials with negative value / chemical recycling / reuse infrastructure, or doesn’t exempt metal cans with plastic lining from being considered a plastic
 - Recycling refunds – recycling is higher with refund based on data, reduces beach litter
 - ix. How industry is engaging
 - Consumer education for aerosols – Aerosol Recycling Initiative with Household Consumer Products Association; addressing data gaps, working with MRFs on acceptability, and increasing public awareness of recyclability; formed Labeling Task Force to educate consumer and advocating for inclusion on statewide “recyclable” lists; social media outreach; MRF Playbook (“Yes We Can!”) and No-to-Yes case studies in Florida
 - Coalition for High Performance Recycling (CHPR) – made up of packaging manufacturers and global beverage brands to develop model for improved recycling; includes hybrid model of EPR + deposit return, overseen by industry without retail or distributor mandates for take-back, and focused on beverage containers; reviewed benefits for local governments, MRFs, consumers, producers / brands, state governments, and ENGOS; timeline is after EPR implementation and a good needs assessment is important to setting targets and planning the program; current state legislation in Rhode Island (HB7911 /

SB3012), Washington (HB1607 / SB5502), Maryland (HB331 / SB342); WA and MD bills are recycling refund only with EPR already passed

b. Questions from Advisory Council members clarified elements of the Can Manufacturers Institute presentation:

- i. Is there any data more current than 2023 for recycling rates? – That is the most current data, and that report is being updated to a 3rd version.
- ii. Can you explain the exemption on plastic linings on cans? – California's EPR law has defined plastic to include the lining on the inside of the can (they are the only state to do that so far); CMI's view is that it is such a minimal part of the composition of the can that it shouldn't be reported as a plastic.
- iii. What happens to the plastic lining in the can recycling process? – It burns off in the smelting / remelting process; it doesn't hurt the recycling of the can.
- iv. Is the plastic lining on a can truly necessary, and does CMI feel that plastic-lined cans should have a higher fee or lower eco-modulation or recycling value? – The plastic lining protects the food or beverage from leaching from the metal and preventing corrosion of the metal, particularly for acidic products. Malus fees aren't necessary because the plastic is such a thin and small amount and the can is still fully recyclable.
- v. CMI opposes that reusable packaging pays once, why are you opposed to that since it is used repeatedly? – Paying each time can pay for the infrastructure for reusables, and it ensures equity so that a non-reusable can doesn't subsidize a reuse system.
- vi. Regarding recycling refund, is that a required element or an allowable element for good policy? – CMI wants to see recycling refund as an option, one way to do it could be to mandate a refund system if recovery doesn't reach a certain level.
- vii. Can a PRO implement a recycling refund system as a component of its plan without direct legislation? – There should be legislation to allow this.
- viii. For states where aerosols are included on acceptables lists, are MRFs accepting aerosols now? – CMI believes they are, based on information from The Recycling Partnership. It is important that they be empty and that consumers need to be educated about this.
- ix. Aluminum is acknowledged to be an important material for MRFs with high value. Removing aluminum cans through recycling refund would be a major financial impact. – EPR financing for MRF operations and potential compensation from the refund organization can potentially provide replacement funding. This would need to be modeled to better measure financial impact.
- x. What is the recycled content in steel can manufacturing currently, and is there capacity to produce more cans with recycled content? – More recycled content can be used in electric arc furnace production of can sheet (more common in Europe, not in the US yet). Current estimate is

that cans include 12-20% recycled content on average, indicating capacity for more use of recycled content if the supply is increased.

- xi. How do you envision the impact on the recycled materials industry with large investment in processing equipment for aluminum cans? – There would be more supply available to capture for recycling both through increased access to recycling and through recycling refund.
- xii. Some state laws have banned disposal of aluminum cans – for example in Wisconsin. Could this be an interim step or replacement for recycling refund? – Enforcement is the likely challenge for effectiveness of a landfill ban. CMI hasn't seen any recent data on that.

5. Draft Needs Assessment Updates

- a. The draft report is due to the Advisory Council by June 30 and IEPA has indicated that is on track.
- b. IEPA will be confirming how the draft report is shared with the public, given that the report will be discussed in open sessions.
- c. Eunomia will present an orientation to the report on July 1 at 10am CT.
- d. Meetings will be added for the 4th Monday of the month in July and August for additional review and discussion by the Advisory Council and finalize comments on the draft report by August 29.
- e. Eunomia will attend the August 10 meeting to answer questions from the Advisory Council.
- f. Consensus / majority opinion on the needs assessment comments were discussed. The initial expectation is that comments will be comprehensive and the Advisory Council can note different perspectives with a goal of a single report. EPR policy shouldn't be an element of the needs assessment review unless it is in the context of a lever for increasing recycling. The later work of the Advisory Council after the needs assessment comments are completed will address EPR policy recommendations, where a minority report may be prepared in accordance with the statute if there is not consensus.
- g. The environmental impacts of plastics / microplastics and source reduction / refill / reuse were discussed, with agreement to hear more about reduction and reuse / refill at a later meeting.
- h. An availability poll will be sent out to add a second meeting monthly for September, October, and November to complete the work of the Advisory Council.

6. Questions and Comments from Council Members

- a. None

7. Public Comment Period

- a. Walter Willis (Solid Waste Agency of Lake County) – Is the decision still being made about whether the needs assessment report will be provided to the public? – The understanding is that it will be provided (with proper disclaimers regarding its draft status and that there is no obligation for comments from the public to be responded to). There should be no discussion of the report contents by the Advisory Council or public

with the media, and that all questions should be referred to IEPA; this should be stated clearly by IEPA when the report is distributed.

8. Next Meeting

- a. July 1, 10-11:30am CT via WebEx
- b. Meeting agenda will include a presentation from Eunomia to orient the Advisory Council to the needs assessment structure, content, and data sources.

9. Adjournment

- a. The meeting adjourned at 1:15 pm CT; motion by Brad Cole, second by Seema Keshav.