Procurement Guidance for Post-Consumer Resin (PCR)

Recycling is an essential step to enable the circular economy and reduce plastic waste, and the production and consumption of recycled content in the form of **post-consumer resin (PCR)** is key. PCR use also helps companies lower GHG emissions, support voluntary commitments (ie: the Ellen MacArthur Foundation and the U.S. Plastics Pact), meet retailer guidelines (ie: as Amazon Climate Friendly Pledge) and most importantly, ensure compliance with legal mandates (ie: California AB 793, Washington 5022 and New Jersey S2515.)

Purchasing **Certified PCR** is the best way to validate that your company is in compliance with recycled content laws and helps protect against legal and reputational challenges. Click HERE to see a directory of reclaimers who manufacture Certified PCR.

If you haven't yet started requiring Certified PCR, below are some of the important questions your procurement team should discuss with its suppliers and a list of APR definitions to consult.

Questions to ask your supplier if you are purchasing resin:

- What different types of resin do you produce & sell (virgin resin, post-consumer resin (PCR), post-industrial resin (PIR))?
- How do you define post-consumer vs post-industrial resin? *(NOTE to procurement team: check answer against our definition below)*
- Overall, what percentage of your resin comes from post-consumer vs post-industrial sources?
    - Does it vary by resin (PET, HDPE, PP, Films, etc.)?
- Can you confirm how much PCR content is in the recycled plastic my company is buying from you?
- What internal processes do you rely on to confirm that the PCR input material is in fact post-consumer?
- How do you confirm how much PIR material is in your recycled resin, if any?
- Have you received PCR certification?
    - If so, which company certified your resin, and when was the date of certification?
        - A copy can be requested

- ○ If not, why, and do you have plans to be certified in the future?
- When input material supply gets low for PCR how do you handle this? Do you ever substitute with virgin or post-industrial resin?

Questions to ask if you are purchasing packaging:

- What different types of resin sources do you use in your packaging (e.g. virgin resin, post-consumer resin (PCR), post-industrial resin (PIR))?
- How do you define post-consumer vs post-industrial resin? *(NOTE to procurement team- check answer against our definition below)*
- Overall, what percentage of your packaging uses virgin vs post-consumer vs post-industrial resin?
  - ○ Does it vary by resin and/or package type (PET, HDPE, PP, Films, etc.)?
- Can you confirm how much PCR is in the packaging my company is buying from you?
- Do you specify and require PCR in your contracts with resin suppliers?
- Do you require PCR certification from your resin suppliers?
  - ○ If not, why and do you have any plans to do so in the future?
  - ○ If not, what internal methods do you use to ensure the resin you buy is in fact PCR?
- When PCR supplies get low, how do you handle this? Do you ever substitute with virgin or post-industrial resin in your packaging?

APR Definitions for Reference:

- APR adheres to definitions set by ISO 14021:2016 (E)
  - ○ **Post-consumer Resin (PCR)** is material generated by households or by commercial, industrial and institutional facilities in their role as end-users of the product which can no longer be used for its intended purpose. This includes return of material from the distribution chain.
  - ○ **Post-Industrial Resin (PIR)** is pre-consumer. It is material diverted from the waste stream during a manufacturing process. Excluded is reutilization of materials such as rework, regrind or scrap generated in a process and capable of being reclaimed with the same process that generated it.

Asking these questions, and ultimately ensuring you are purchasing and using post-consumer recycled content, is an easy way your company can enable the circular economy.   Learn more about PCR and the APR PCR Certification program HERE.

FOR REFERENCE - PER ISO_14021_2016:

7.8 Recycled content

7.8.1 Usage of terms

7.8.1.1 Recycled content and its associated terms shall be interpreted as follows:

a) **Recycled content**

Proportion, by mass, of recycled material in a product or packaging. Only pre-consumer and post-consumer materials shall be considered as recycled content, consistent with the following usage of terms.

　　1) **Pre-consumer material**

　　Material diverted from the waste stream during a manufacturing process. Excluded is reutilization of materials such as rework, regrind or scrap generated in a process and capable of being reclaimed within the same process that generated it.

　　2) **Post-consumer material**

　　Material generated by households or by commercial, industrial and institutional facilities in their role as end-users of the product which can no longer be used for its intended purpose. This includes returns of material from the distribution chain.

b) **Recycled material**

Material that has been reprocessed from recovered [reclaimed] material by means of a manufacturing process and made into a final product or into a component for incorporation into a product.

c) **Recovered [reclaimed] material**

Material that would have otherwise been disposed of as waste or used for energy recovery, but has instead been collected and recovered [reclaimed] as a material input, in lieu of new primary material, for a recycling or a manufacturing process.

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The Association of Plastic Recyclers (APR) is *The Voice of Plastics Recycling*®. As the international trade association representing the plastics recycling industry, membership includes independent recycling companies of all sizes, processing numerous resins, as well as consumer product companies, equipment manufacturers, testing laboratories, organizations, and others committed to the success of plastics recycling. APR advocates the recycling of all plastics. Visit www.PlasticsRecycling.org for more information.