



N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources

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NORTH CAROLINA JOINS NATIONAL CARPET RECYCLING INITIATIVE

RALEIGH – North Carolina has joined seven other states, carpet industry representatives, U.S. EPA and two non-governmental organizations in signing an agreement aimed at cutting landfill disposal of old carpeting over the next decade.

Secretary William G. Ross Jr. of the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources last week signed the National Carpet Recycling Agreement, in which carpet manufacturers pledge to assume responsibility for their product throughout its life cycle, from design to disposal. "This agreement signifies a spirit of cooperation in how government and industry can work together to protect the environment," said Ross. "This voluntary agreement allows the carpet manufacturers, working with their government partners, to define the best approach for achieving the 10-year 40 percent landfill diversion goal."

Representatives from the carpet industry and government developed a schedule for the phase-out of land disposal and incineration of post-consumer carpet in combination with increasing goals for recycling and reuse. Manufacturers will work to divert 40 percent of the 2.5 million tons of carpets that now end up in the nation's landfills through a range of alternative management methods including recycling, reuse, cement kilns, and incineration with energy recovery (waste-to-energy).

The industry has formed an independent group, the Carpet America Recovery Effort (CARE), to achieve the goals. Matt Ewadinger, manager of the N.C. Recycling Business Assistance Center (RBAC), serves as co-chair of the CARE Business Development Committee and is a member of the organization's executive committee.

Ewadinger also served as chair of the industry/government group's recycling subcommittee. This group concluded that state and federal government officials could aid carpet recovery by:

- Providing technical assistance to carpet recycling businesses with sourcing, processing and remanufacturing of secondary materials, and marketing their end products;
- Providing business development assistance such as: as identifying and, where applicable, providing funding sources (such as grants, loans, and equity investment), facility siting, business plan development, entrepreneurial training, and funding demonstration projects;
- Develop and assist in the implementation of procurement guidelines designed to increase the purchase of carpets made with recycled content and increase the purchase of other products made with recycled carpet content;
- Educate the consumer and other potential customers (both public and private sector) to new carpet recovery-oriented products as they develop, and promote the purchase of those products.

The first of its kind in the United States, this recycling agreement is considered a model for future product stewardship initiatives, with electronics and paint as future possibilities. Other states that signed the agreement are: California, Iowa, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Oregon and Wisconsin.

For more information, please contact Matt Ewadinger, RBAC manager, at (919) 715-6504 or matt.ewadinger@ncmail.net, or visit the Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance Web site at <http://www.moea.state.mn.us/carpet/index.cfm>.

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