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**UPSTREAM**  
Where Waste Solutions Begin

**UPSTREAM Quarterly**

Spring 2014



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## Starting the Next Chapter



**By Mark Hays – President, UPSTREAM Board of Directors**

It's been six months since Product Policy Institute became UPSTREAM, and the amount of activity we've seen since then reflects the growing momentum that led us to change our name in the first place.

We've revamped our website, doubled our social media friends and followers, presented at six conferences, co-facilitated an industry/NGO workshop on packaging, coordinated and supported efforts on twelve bills in eight different states, supported efforts to phase out plastic microbeads in personal care products, and launched a major collaborative campaign to pressure big companies to take responsibility for packaging waste. There's enough going on that it is difficult to keep track!

Given all this activity, it would be tempting for us to imagine that a world – where extended producer responsibility is a common practice – is just around the corner. But, as many of you know, the reality is there's a great deal of work still needed to even scratch the surface when it comes to reckoning with the colossal problem of waste and its impacts on our environment, health, and communities.

What's more, there are a wide range of challenges we face in seeking a more sustainable economy that harnesses upstream solutions to address the root causes of waste – cash-strapped local governments, complex and thorny supply chains, shifting trends in packaging and product design that create new waste problems even as they solve old ones – just to name

a few.

Yet, looking at these challenges, I'm still optimistic for the simple reason that the spirit of advocacy around EPR, waste reduction and product stewardship is based on the idea that the 'problems' we face are often opportunities if you view them from a different perspective, and often contain their own solutions.

I'm confident that UPSTREAM is well-positioned to find those opportunities and advocate for change that will help realize the potential of all those opportunities. And, one reason I have that confidence is that I know our work is made more effective and further-reaching in large part because of our partners, supporters, allies and friends like you. So, in that spirit, and in an effort to continue to broaden the dialogue on the potential of producer responsibility to transform our society's relationship to waste and resources, we invite you to take a look at our new e-newsletter for more in-depth updates on our work, the latest trends in upstream solutions, and thought-provoking ideas from some of the leading voices in this field.

We hope this newsletter will be a valuable resource for you in your ongoing work and advocacy, and look forward to sharing more with you – and hearing from you as well –in the months ahead!

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## Project Highlights



### Make It, Take It Packaging Campaign Launches

We're thrilled to announce that the *Make It, Take It Campaign* – a collaborative effort to pressure companies to take responsibility for packaging waste – was launched on April 30<sup>th</sup>. Over the past year, UPSTREAM brought together organizations working on plastic pollution, resource conservation/paper and zero waste/recycling issues to jointly create the campaign. The groups include the Natural

Resources Defense Council, Clean Water Action, Green America, Sierra Club EPR Team, Waterkeeper Alliance, Plastic Pollution Coalition, 5 Gyres, Texas Campaign for the Environment, and Eureka Recycling. Together, these organizations have a combined outreach of hundreds of thousands of concerned citizens. The coalition chose Kraft's Capri Sun plastic laminate pouches as the first target because they are emblematic of a broader problem in packaging design: the switch to flexible plastic packaging that is designed to be thrown away. We will be sustaining this effort through the summer, and will release our next campaign action in July.



### EPR Packaging Summit Signals Shift in Business Perspectives

On March 4, UPSTREAM and Future500 hosted an invitation-only forum for 40 public-interest, business and government stakeholders working on extended producer responsibility, source reduction, and recycling initiatives for packaging. The purpose of the summit was to pull together key stakeholders and experts working on packaging design and recycling to understand and align NGO, business and government needs, priorities and perspectives. While there was not agreement over EPR for packaging or container deposits as presented, there was general agreement that producers bear some financial responsibility for minimizing packaging waste and increasing recovery. Key obstacles to building a broad enough coalition to

pass EPR legislation are a) unknown financial exposure for the brand-owners and b) the issue of who controls the system for local governments, waste-haulers and MRF operators/processors.



### **UPSTREAM Launches Local Government Packaging Call Series**

Following the EPR packaging summit, we assessed the landscape and potential for moving EPR for packaging forward in the United States. While there has been a tremendous amount of activity by many stakeholders on this subject, there has not been a widespread outpouring of support from brands, local governments or waste/recycling businesses. A lot of this is due to confusion as well as legitimate concerns over too much producer control in the policy options currently being implemented in British Columbia and presented in the United States. To answer this, we've created a call series with a select group of local and state government officials to: (1) Identify the key barriers to support for EPR from local governments, waste haulers recyclers and NGOs; (2) Develop policies that directly address those barriers and win support for a strong, market-based EPR proposal.



### **UPSTREAM Supports the Phase-out of Plastic Microbeads in Personal Care Products**

In January, UPSTREAM teamed up with 5 Gyres – a plastic pollution research and advocacy organization – to push cosmetics manufacturers to phase out the use of plastic microbeads, an unnecessary ingredient and widespread source of plastic pollution in the environment. We co-developed a fact sheet and worked with 5 Gyres, CRADLE2 and the National Caucus of Environmental Legislators to engage legislators and NGOs on the issue. Our strategy of trying to persuade the US Environmental Protection Agency to convene a dialogue between NGOs and industry to set mediated phase-out deadlines for microbeads users reached a dead end when, after weeks of petitioning and some negotiating, EPA declined our request to convene a dialogue. At this point, we are waiting to see what happens with the legislation introduced in California and New York. If either bill passes, we will have accomplished what we needed to do with a dialogue legislatively. Huge kudos to our friends at 5 Gyres for their remarkable work in getting this issue in the press and getting traction in the CA and NY state legislatures.



### **CRADLE2 Coalition Sets Agenda for 2014**

On January 24<sup>th</sup>, the CRADLE2 Coalition met in Providence, Rhode Island for our annual meeting to develop our 2014 work plan and strategize for the upcoming year. The group unanimously gave approval to expand the scope of the coalition's work beyond just EPR to include upstream policies focused on eliminating or mitigating the environmental impacts of products and packaging. We planned subcommittee work on packaging, phased-out our paint committee and created new committees on source reduction and batteries. We also brainstormed and developed outlines for five coalition projects, and discussed how to better harmonize our legislative policy work.

### **UPSTREAM helps create new Sierra Club, Zero Waste-Producer Responsibility Team**

UPSTREAM helped co-create a new team within the Sierra Club's



Grassroots Network to advocate for local, state and corporate policies to eliminate waste at the source — by holding producers responsible for good design and end-of-life management. UPSTREAM's Bill Sheehan chairs the team, and it includes Sierra Club members and CRADLE2 partners Robin Schneider (TX), Heidi Sanborn (CA), and Lynne Pledger (MA). The Team is currently promoting campaigns aimed at getting battery maker Rayovac to take back its disposable single-use batteries and to get the pharmaceutical industry in California to pay for take-back of unwanted medicines. The Team is recruiting new Sierra Club members through Sierra EPR [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) pages, and a Grassroots Network [website](#).

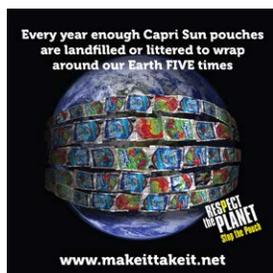


### UPSTREAM to hold EPR-Financing Call Series

Over the past several years, EPR advocates have had difficulty passing legislation which holds producers directly responsible for financing takeback programs, which was the trend with e-waste and most mercury products legislation passed from 2004-2011. The trend for politically-winnable bills has moved from producer financing (cost internalization of environmental management) to consumer fee-based bills (paint, mattresses, and now mercury lamps): a situation which concerns many advocates. UPSTREAM/CRADLE2 will hold a call series on fee-based vs cost internalization starting in June to discuss with the broader product stewardship community.

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## Take Action



### Tell KRAFT Foods to “Respect the Planet. Stop the Pouch.”

Did you know that an estimated 1.4 billion Capri Sun pouches are landfilled or littered each year in the United States? Stacked end to end, that's enough pouches to wrap around the Earth almost five times (121,527 miles). It's nearly half-way to the moon! Capri Sun pouches are made by bonding aluminum and several layers of plastic together making them difficult to impossible to recycle. [Read](#)

[more and sign the petition.](#)

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## Legislation Updates



UPSTREAM is coordinating and supporting work on 12 bills this legislative session involving batteries, e-waste, paint, microbeads and more. [Read More »](#)

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## UPSTREAM in the News

2degrees Community: ["How many Capri Sun pouches are littered each year? It might be why they're the first target of a new](#)



[campaign...](#) - May 2, 2014

Sustainable Brands: ["Make It, Take It' Campaign Pressures Companies to Take Responsibility for Packaging Waste](#) - April 30,

2014

The Maine Public Broadcasting Network: [Maine Man Leads National Effort to Reduce Packaging Waste](#) - April 30, 2014

Plastic News: [Consortium targets Capri Sun in new push to emphasize recycling](#) - April 30, 2014

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## Spotlight



In an effort to highlight the great work of many sustainability professionals, each issue of this newsletter will feature an UPSTREAM board member or NGO.

Please meet, **David Stitzhal, President of Full Circle Environmental, Inc.** and UPSTREAM board secretary.

### **Q. How has your work impacted EPR, source reduction, or recycling initiatives?**

Reflecting on his 25 years in the industry, David describes his work as comprised of hands-on technical assistance to businesses on one hand, and policy development targeted at problem products such as pharmaceuticals, carpet, used oil, automobiles, batteries and electronics on the other. "It's a nice blend of concrete projects and big picture policy development; the different modes inform each other well, and are really incomplete without the other," says Stitzhal. David was part of the team that established the first state producer responsibility electronic recycling program in the United States, now known as Washington's E-Cycle Program. He has served on a number of national and local multi-stakeholder dialogues for hard to handle materials. David also helped create the first Product Stewardship Council in the nation, the Northwest Product Stewardship Council, for which he served as coordinator for 15 years. [Read More »](#)



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