

STAR 2019 Texas Glass Recycling Workshop

AUSTIN, TEXAS – In the spirit of America Recycles Week (headed by the EPA), the State of Texas Alliance for Recycling (STAR) hosted a workshop on November 13, 2019, to dig into the current challenges, looming barriers, and potential solutions for increasing end-markets and the circulation of glass in Texas. The sold-out Texas Glass Recycling Workshop was a great success, resulting in a day full of important conversations among a variety of stakeholders about where Texas currently stands with glass recycling.

STAR's Executive Director, Jordan Fengel, along with Glass Recycling Coalition (GRC) representative and O-I VP of Global Sustainability, Jim Nordmeyer, welcomed a crowd of 50 participants to the event, which was coordinated in Austin by STAR and the GRC. The Workshop was sponsored by Strategic Materials, who utilized Poll Everywhere, a live polling and interactive program, to engage attendees during two breakout sessions. EPA Region 6 provided breakout session worksheets for attendees. The workshop truly brought forth the collaborative nature of the recycling industry.



A highlight of the day was when Balcones Resources was [presented](#) the industry's first *MRF Glass Certification* (pictured, left) by Laura Henneman, GRC representative and Strategic Materials VP of Marketing and Communications, and Jim Nordmeyer. The free certification program recognizes MRFs that have additional equipment and operational procedures for cleaning up glass in both single and dual-stream systems, which thereby produce more marketable and higher quality glass. By achieving this certification, Balcones Resources is gaining a

competitive advantage in the recycled glass marketplace.

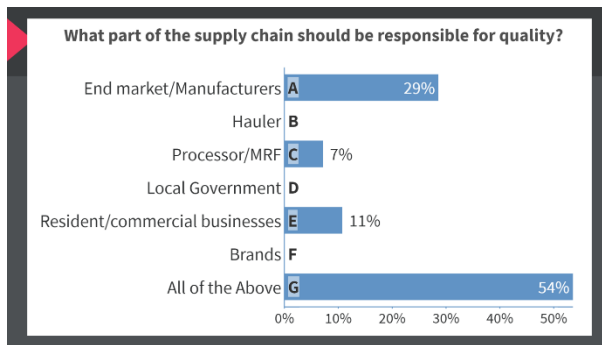
Outstanding presentations were given throughout the day by representatives from O-I, Strategic Materials, FCC Environmental Services, Independent Texas Recyclers, Pratt Industries, Conscious Containers, and End of Waste Foundation. The interactive session opened with an ice-breaker activity that asked attendees to describe the current state of glass recycling in Texas. (See slide, right.) Their responses revealed a colorful array of descriptions, but the terms most used were, "challenging," "inconsistent," and "limited."



STAR provided participants with several useful data points from the TCEQ's [2015 Economic Impact of Recycling in Texas](#) study, such as the number of recycling jobs, processors, and MRFs in Texas; as well as revealed that the economic value of recovering just 60% of the 657,577 tons of glass landfilled in Texas annually would result in \$25,645,490 added to the Texas economy.

Attendees got a chance to work together during two breakout sessions over the course of the day: one that focused on the barriers to glass recycling; and the other to identify solutions for glass recycling in Texas. Many useful ideas were generated that will help STAR advance glass recycling and reuse in Texas.

In the morning session, participants were asked to list what they feel are barriers to glass recycling in Texas. The responses showed that there are multiple issues, including a "lack of financial incentives, education, value, and economics," but most responses conveyed that the greatest barrier was the "quality" of the material.



Another polling of the audience sought opinions on who in the supply chain they feel is responsible for the overall quality of recycled glass in Texas. The response was mixed, with 29% of attendees responding that manufacturers are responsible, 7% saying it is the MRFs, 11% stating it is the responsibility of the municipality and commercial sectors, and 52% stating that it is a combined effort.

The final poll of the workshop asked participants their thoughts on what the biggest opportunities are for glass recycling in Texas. The poll revealed that "municipal education" was at the top of the list, while also including a wealth of suggestions, such as, "landfill-tax," "infrastructure," "refillable bottles," "circular economy," and "STAR."

Capping off this amazing event was a presentation by [End of Waste Foundation](#) (EOW) founder Ionut Georgescu, who explained their company's use of blockchain technology to track quantities of glass through each stage of the recycling process, thereby creating powerful marketing opportunities and a truly circular economy. EOW put out a call offering all Texas MRFs, manufacturers, local governments, and haulers a no-cost pilot program to help advance glass recycling in Texas.



STAR is proud to help generate conversations and gather the data and people needed to advance material circulation in Texas, and beyond, by hosting workshops that bring together multiple stakeholders. The Texas Glass Recycling Workshop, as well as the other workshops and webinars STAR hosts and supports, advance STAR's mission to advance recycling through partnerships, education, and advocacy for the benefit of Texas.