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Study and Plan Will Examine Current Recycling Economy in Texas, Discover Opportunities for Growth & Propose Action

Recycling Market Development Plan creates comprehensive educational campaign to cover economics of recycling in Texas, highlight businesses involved, and reduce contamination.

AUSTIN, TEXAS – A statewide survey will be launched June 1st, 2020 that seeks to document recycling and the use of recyclables in manufacturing in Texas, as well as evaluate multiple recycling economic issues in greater detail. Survey results will be used to develop a Recycling Market Development Plan, which will provide recommendations for Texas policy makers to utilize the economic, environmental and policy issues of interest to Texas businesses, citizens, and governmental agencies.

The effort is the result of a bill passed in the 86th Texas legislative session (Senate Bill 649), which requires the creation of a Recycling Market Development Plan to take an updated look at the economics of the recycling industry in Texas and provide details about the current and needed infrastructure to manage the state's recyclables. The Plan will also provide various recommendations on how to support and grow the Texas recycling industry. An educational campaign will also be developed to highlight the economic benefits of recycling, the companies in Texas utilizing recycled feedstock, and contamination reduction messaging.

"Senate Bill 649 is an important step toward fostering the continued growth of recycling in Texas. The new law will help promote and expand markets for recyclable materials in our state, protect and create jobs in the industry, and educate consumers to recycle properly and reduce contamination," said Senator Judith Zaffirini, D-Laredo, the bill's author. "This survey will ensure the Recycling Market Development Plan is grounded in fact, not supposition, and I highly encourage all interested stakeholders to participate."

Through a competitive bidding process, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) retained engineering and environmental consulting firm Burns and McDonnell to complete the project.

Burns and McDonnell previously worked to complete and release the Study on the Economic Impacts of Recycling (SEIR) in 2017. The Recycling Market Development Plan will utilize the methodology of SEIR, with a focus on the economic impacts of the

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recycling industry in Texas, and additionally develop a plan to stimulate the use of recycled materials, as well as a comprehensive educational campaign about recycling and contamination reduction.

"The Recycling Market Development Plan will build on the successful foundation of the Study on the Economic Impacts of Recycling. We invite recyclers and manufacturers from throughout the supply chain to participate in this year's effort, as their help will be essential to develop resilient, future-looking recycling markets for Texas-generated materials," said Scott Pasternak, Burns & McDonnell Senior Project Manager, who led the SEIR effort and is now managing the Recycling Market Development Plan.

The survey released on June 1st, 2020 will be a collaborative and voluntary process with recycling processors and end markets to collect information on recyclable materials diverted from the municipal solid waste (MSW) and industrial solid waste streams. The Study and Plan seek to assess current recycling efforts, identify methods to increase recycling, and recommend state-level mechanisms to support infrastructure needs that will result in increased job creation and a more robust materials recovery industry in Texas.

Since the Recycling Market Development Plan will request recycling and economic data from private recycling companies, Burns and McDonnell will take every measure allowed by law to protect confidentiality and will have non-disclosure agreements available for survey participants.

"The data we gather is imperative to the construction of the recycling market development plan. The plan will help us build a stronger, more circular materials management system in Texas, and that means more jobs and revenue for Texas cities and businesses, and less waste," said STAR Executive Director Jordan Fengel.

The confidential, online survey released on June 1st, 2020, will allow participants to report their recycling data for the 2019 calendar year. The survey closes August 31st, 2020. The results will be included in the TCEQ report, "Municipal Solid Waste in Texas: A Year in Review." Participation is crucial for the Plan to be successful. Burns and McDonnell encourages industry representatives and recyclers across Texas to contribute to this effort and to help spread the word through their various professional networks.

For more information about the project, please visit www.txrecyclingstudy.org.

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