



News Release

California State Parks

Contact: Roy Stearns – (916) 654-7538 or (916) 799-1036

American Chemistry Council

Press hotline: 1-866-922-7165

Keep California Beautiful

Contact: Christine Flowers-Ewing – 1-800-CLEANCA (1-800-253-2622)

CA State Parks, American Chemistry Council and Keep California Beautiful Announce Partnership for Beach Clean-Up and Plastics Recycling

*Jean-Michel Cousteau supports partnership that
seeks to keep plastics out of ocean and waterways*

(Leo Carrillo State Beach – February 8, 2008) Citing the need for all Californians to work together to reduce litter and marine debris, state government, the private sector and nonprofit groups today announced the formation of a public-private partnership to increase the recycling of plastics. The goal is to help keep recyclable plastics out of the ocean and waterways – and instead into recycling bins.

Renowned Oceanographer Jean-Michel Cousteau, President and Chairman of the Ocean Futures Society has also joined leaders from all three organizations to formally kick off this on-going, statewide campaign.

Leaders from the State Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks), the American Chemistry Council (ACC) and Keep California Beautiful (KCB) this week formally announced a new, beach recycling program on State Parks sites in the Los Angeles coastal area. The program is focused on increasing the recycling of plastics to help protect the state's environment for future generations.

Public-private partnerships have become popular under the leadership of California's governor. In his January 2008 State of the State Address, Gov. Schwarzenegger said the State needs to expand partnerships where government and the private sector work together to meet the needs of the people.

The recycling of plastics in California – which otherwise may be wasted in landfills or left as litter on beaches – can help reduce marine debris. As a result, partnership leaders are working to deliver additional recycling bins and/or educational displays that say “Plastics. Too Valuable to Waste. Recycle.”

Significant program funding through 2008 is coming from the ACC.

“Too much plastic – including some of the most readily recyclable products in the world – is ending up as litter on our beaches and in our waterways,” said ACC Products Division Vice President Sharon Kneiss. “We know Californians want to recycle more. This new partnership highlights our commitment to work with government officials, nonprofit groups and potentially other recycling partners to help make our environment cleaner and provide for the future of California.”

“California State Parks welcomes the opportunity to partner with the private sector and Keep California Beautiful to promote the value of recycling plastics and other materials,” said State Parks Director Ruth Coleman. “This program will help to prevent litter on beaches that costs taxpayers dollars to collect.”

About 76 million people visited California’s State Parks during the 2005/06 fiscal year, with many traveling to visit the 320 miles of ocean-front property managed by State Parks. Until now, there has not been a widespread public education program that encourages park visitors to recycle plastics instead of placing them in the trash or leaving them behind.

More than 80 percent of U.S. households have access to a recycling program, be it curbside collection or community drop-off centers. Yet in most areas, the demand for recycled plastics exceeds the available supply. While there are approximately 2,100 certified recycling centers in California, many Californians still treat plastics as trash instead of a valuable material that is readily recyclable.

Keep California Beautiful also plays an important role in the beach recycling program. It is a nonprofit, environmental organization that promotes individual responsibility for California’s environment through mobilizing tens of thousands of volunteers to conduct cleanup, litter prevention, recycling and beautification projects throughout the state.

“KCB is excited to join with State Parks and the plastics industry to form this new public-private partnership,” said KCB Executive Director Christine Flowers-Ewing. “We’ll be working to help increase awareness of recycling as a method for litter prevention, and to help Californians get the message that plastics should be recycled, not wasted.”

In addition to the beach recycling program, a diverse group of government, private sector and non-profit group representatives recently concluded a Marine Debris Solutions Workshop on November 30, 2007. At the conclusion of the workshop, of which the ACC was a primary sponsor, participants identified promoting partnerships, developing a nationwide anti-litter education strategy, and increasing the focus on recycling as central to addressing challenges associated with marine debris. The group is now beginning implementation of these recommendations.

In 2008, the partnership plans to expand its program and invest \$2.5 million in similar recycling and litter prevention programs throughout the state, in areas such as Monterey, Santa Cruz, San Diego and the Los Angeles River.

During 2006, Californians recycled more than 12 billion beverage containers – an increase of 814 million containers compared to 2005. California still leads the nation in total quantity of bottles and cans recycled.

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