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-Dr. Scott Carter

The Daily Line
Guest Commentary



Plastic is one of the most common materials used to create many of the products we use and depend on in countless ways. From everyday household items to industrial uses, understanding how this material can and should be properly recycled, and the benefits that come with that, can make a significant impact on protecting our environment.

At Tek Pak, Inc., a global manufacturing company based in Batavia, we recognize our responsibility to minimize our

environmental footprint. To this end, we've set ambitious goals, aiming to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2033. This bold objective serves as a guiding principle for all our sustainability initiatives. One of the cornerstones of our sustainability efforts is our proactive approach to recycling industrial plastic scrap. We recently began collecting and recycling flexible plastics; this includes bags, bubble wrap and shrink wrap, materials that are not processed in normal recycling facilities. This low density polyethylene (LDPE) will become feedstock for composite decking and will eliminate even more plastic waste going to landfills. By repurposing trim and setup scrap generated during the production process, we're able to close the loop on plastic waste and reduce the need for virgin materials.

Traditional recycling technology excludes many materials and products, pushing them into the trash stream (and ultimately into landfills). Legislation was introduced in 2023 that would extend authorization windows for the construction of new advanced recycling facilities, adjusting time frames originally set out in 2019 legislation but which were disrupted by COVID-19 pandemic-related delays. [HB 1616](#) is an honest and necessary acknowledgement that our collective waste disposal methods are in need of modernization, but the effort to extend the authorization windows stalled with the bill still sitting in the Rules Committee as the spring legislative session adjourned.

While plastics are integral to our business, we're committed to minimizing their environmental impact through innovation and responsible stewardship. As the world embraces sustainability, our industries must evolve, too. Advanced recycling presents Illinois with an innovative solution to address the challenges associated with traditional waste disposal. Implementing this technology promotes a circular economy that minimizes waste while encouraging manufacturers to utilize resources responsibly. Legislators understood the promise of advanced recycling technology in 2019 when the original bill passed with bipartisan support; it was the right call then, and it remains the right call now. I'm hopeful the General Assembly takes action to adjust the timeframes and clear the way for advanced recycling in Illinois in the fall.

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