

Mass Balance for Postconsumer Resin (PCR)

APR POSITION: APR supports a mass balance and/or corporate averaging methodology for resin manufacturers that produce recycled content resin in a chemical recycling system in which materials are not segregated by material type.

Value: Mass balance and corporate averaging help create demand markets for postconsumer material.

Key Messages

- In a chemical recycling system, mass balance allocates an equivalent of its input feedstocks that were derived from chemical recycling processes across one or more of its products manufactured using such feedstocks.
- Mass balance methodologies need to be grounded in driving credibility and scalability to increase the amount of plastics that are recycled and the use of PCR in plastic manufacturing.
- APR does not support environmental marketing claims based on mass balance whereby a brand company allocates the available amount of PCR across a product line(s) for the purposes of claiming a certain PCR percentage per product while some of those products may contain zero PCR. For example, Brand Company X acquires 100 lbs. of PCR and puts all 100 lbs. in Widget A and zero in Widget B. APR supports a claim of 100% PCR in Widget A but does not support Company X claiming 50% content in Widgets A & B.
- APR supports the use of corporate averaging for sustainability reports whereby a company states an average PCR based on total PCR purchased across all product lines and compared to virgin resin purchases.
- Claims based on mass balance should be restricted to the utilization of postconsumer resin.
- Companies should only claim postconsumer content if postconsumer content was used. Misleading marketing claims stating postconsumer resin neither encourage nor enable higher demand for recycled plastics.
- Increasing the available supply of high quality PCR will help consumer goods companies satisfy their recycled content commitments.