



FOODSERVICE PACKAGING  
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# Foam Recycling Coalition

Matt Todd | August 2022



- Established in 1933
- Only industry trade association in North America solely focused on all single-use foodservice packaging products
- Members include:
  - Converters and their raw material and machinery suppliers (roughly 85% of the industry);
  - Foodservice distributors and operators

# FPI's Recovery Groups

Paper Recovery Alliance  
(PRA)

Plastics Recovery Group  
(PRG)



Foam Recycling Coalition  
(FRC)

Paper Cup Alliance  
(PCA)

# Foam Recycling Coalition



# Foam Recycling Coalition

## Goal

- To support the recycling of post-consumer foam polystyrene (PS) foodservice and protective packaging.

# Current Foam Recycling Coalition Members (2022)



# Foam Foodservice Packaging: The Basics

- What is it?
  - Cups, plates, bowls, clamshells, trays (cafeteria and processor), egg packaging
- How much\*?
  - By weight: less than 1% of municipal solid waste
  - By units: About one-third of plastic FSP
- Where to recover it?
  - Curbside and Drop-off
  - Commercial and institutional

## Project Work

- General education about foam recycling
- Understanding end markets
  - End market study
- Grant program
  - FRC offers grants to public and private businesses in the U.S. and/or Canada to recycle foam FSP and protective packaging
  - Recipients will receive funding for equipment, technical assistance
  - 32 grant projects have been awarded funding since 2015
  - [www.recyclefoam.org](http://www.recyclefoam.org)



# FRC Infographic



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## ACTIVE GRANT PROJECTS



24 total grants have been awarded. Chart shows cumulative number of FRC grantees that have installed equipment and are operating foam PS recycling programs through the end of 2021.



## Impact of Foam PS Recycling Grants in North America

FPI's Foam Recycling Coalition has awarded grants across North America to increase the recycling of foam polystyrene. The data here summarizes the impact of the grants that have been implemented from 2017 through 2021. FRC began awarding grants in 2015. For more details, please visit [www.RecycleFoam.org](http://www.RecycleFoam.org)

## VALUE OF FOAM RECYCLED PER YEAR (\$USD)



Market value of densified post-consumer foam PS packaging collected by grantees

## INCREASE IN ACCESS TO FOAM RECYCLING PER YEAR



Additional population that have access to foam recycling based on active FRC grant projects.

## LANDFILL SPACE SAVED PER YEAR (53FT TRAILER LOADS)



Volume of foam converted to an equivalent number of tractor trailer loads. 53 ft trailer = 3,816 cubic feet, non-densified foam = 1.30lb/ cubic ft.

## TOTAL WEIGHT OF FOAM RECYCLED PER YEAR (LBS)



Reported weight collected for recycling from active grantees.

## **Purpose:**

- Increase public access to post-consumer foam recycling through curbside and/or drop off programs
- Drive actual recovery of foam (increased tons)
- Generate success stories

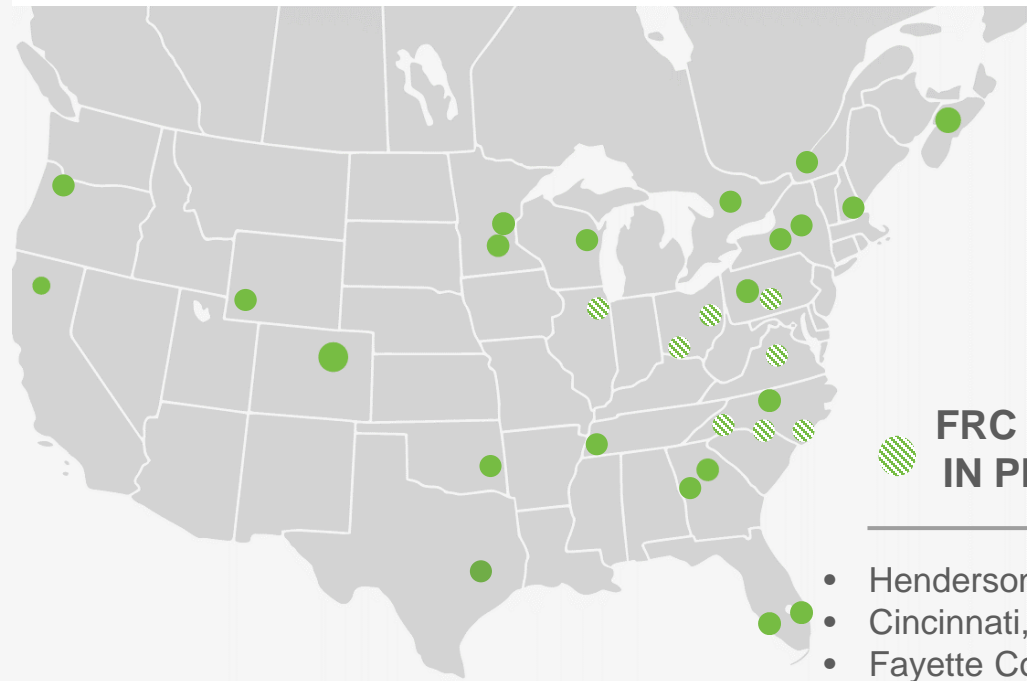
## **Provide funding for:**

- Foam recycling equipment (up to \$50,000/grant)
- Technical assistance to grant recipients and others interested in adding foam to their curbside or drop-off recycling programs

# FRC Grant Communities

## FRC GRANT COMMUNITIES

- Metro Denver, CO
- Colchester County, Nova Scotia
- Athens-Clarke County, GA
- McLeod County, MN
- Redding, CA
- Madison County, NY
- Agilyx – Tigard, OR
- Pyrowave – Valleyfield, Quebec
- Atlanta, GA
- Hanover-Brockton, Ontario
- Otsego County, NY
- Austin, TX
- Westmoreland County, PA
- Greensboro, NC (x2)
- Coon Rapids, MN
- St Lucie County, FL
- Collier County, FL
- Norman, OK
- Rock Spring, WY
- Memphis, TN
- Outagamie County, WI
- Gilford County, NH



## FRC GRANTS IN PROCESS

- Henderson County, NC
- Cincinnati, OH
- Fayette County, PA
- Geauga-Trumbull, OH
- Mecklenburg County, NC
- Mount Prospect, IL
- Wilmington, NC (UNC-W)
- Troy, VA

# County of Colchester, Nova Scotia

- Provides recycling services to 130,000 residents.
- Transports collected recyclables to county-owned and operated dual-stream MRF.
- County estimated foam polystyrene comprised 1%, or 620 tons, of annual municipal waste stream.
- Awarded \$50,000 grant from FRC to purchase foam densifier.
- Foam densifier installed in MRF in April 2016.



# Foam PS Recycling in County of Colchester

- Within the first 6 months, the county recovered 8 tons of densified foam, increasing month over month.
- Manufacturers use PS pellets to make products like decorative molding and other building products.



## Key Learnings and Recommendations:

- Found that grant funding significantly lowered barriers of initial costs in order to participate.
- Through careful planning and promotion, the County has found they are ripe for foam polystyrene recycling.



# Alpine Waste and Recycling Denver, CO



- Alpine (now GFL) services residential and commercial customers.
- Alpine used the \$45,000 FRC grant as an investment tool to assist and justify the cost/benefit of recovering foam at their new single stream MRF.

# Foam PS Recycling at Alpine

- Alpine found both west coast and Midwest end market options for their densified foam, but use an Asian export market for best pricing (range of \$.06/lb. - \$.12/lb.)

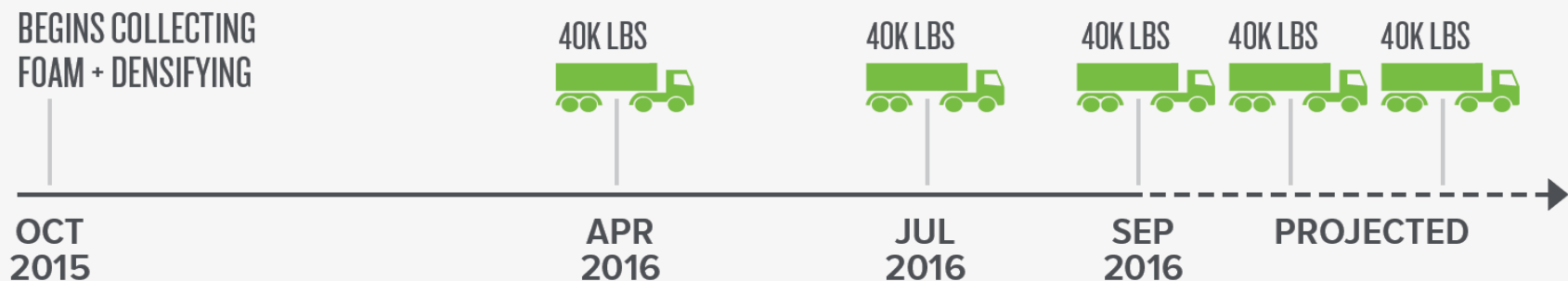


# Foam PS Recycling at Alpine

- Alpine promoted their kick-off event during America Recycles Day.
  - Contest for Denver area residents to bring the largest amount of foam to Alpine's recycling facility, winner would win a free lunch for two weeks from a local restaurant!

## UPTICK IN FULL-TRUCK FREQUENCY FOR ALPINE WASTE AND RECYCLING

- Current generation (2019) for Alpine is approximately 26 tons of densified foam PS per quarter





# Redding, CA program

- 92,000 population
- Drop-off foam PS program
- City-run program
- City owned MRF (sort option)



# Redding, CA



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- 0.62 lbs/capita recovered
- Commodity grade plastic
- High demand





# Tiny House Community Development – Greensboro, NC

- 2020 grantee
- Multi-party collaboration includes 4 NGO's:
  - funders
  - activators
  - operators
- Promotional support from the City of Greensboro



# Tiny House Community Development – Greensboro, NC

- 15,000+ lbs. recycled in 7 months
- Commodity grade plastic
- Expansion plans underway to provide drop-off site in High Point, NC



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# Foam Recycling Toolkit

## INTRODUCTION

In 2014, the Foam Recycling Coalition (FRC) was launched to support increased recycling of foodservice packaging made from foam polystyrene. In order to meet this objective, the FRC shares general information on foam recycling, provides technical resources and offers funding assistance to programs ready to start or strengthen post-consumer foam recycling.

In addition to encouraging the recycling of foam foodservice packaging (i.e. cups, plates, bowls, clamshells and cafeteria trays), the efforts of the FRC also extend to other foam food packaging like egg cartons and meat trays.

