

The Honorable Joseph I. Lieberman
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator Lieberman:

Thank you for your letter of January 18, 2000 on behalf of your constituent, Raymond Lafferty, regarding the use of reprocessed rubber in new tires. Mr. Lafferty stated there are no incentives for new car manufacturers to use reprocessed rubber in new tires, and wondered why.

Currently, several tire companies are incorporating reprocessed, or crumb rubber from tires in new tire manufacture. The Scrap Tire Management Council reports that when crumb rubber is used in new tires, it is generally used only at the 0.5 to 1 percent level. However, there are a few exceptions. For instance, Michelin produces tires for the Windstar minivan containing 5 percent recovered materials. One consideration is that rubber has undergone a process called vulcanization, which means that rubber, unlike aluminum or glass, cannot simply be melted down and reused. In using scrap tire in new tires, it is generally used in the less critical parts of the tire.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is considering a future designation of tires incorporating recovered material, as part of its continuing efforts to develop guidelines for procurement of recycled products by federal agencies. These guidelines encourage government purchasers and their contractors to purchase products made with recycled content. For more information on these procurement guidelines, your constituent may wish to consult the internet at www.epa.gov/cpg.

At EPA, we encourage the reuse and recycling of scrap tires. Crumb rubber from scrap tires has been used very successfully in rubberized asphalt; Arizona, California, and Florida are leaders in this area. Rubberized asphalt can potentially use a very large quantity of crumb rubber from scrap tires. For more information on these uses, your constituent may wish to consult the Rubber Pavements Association at (602) 517-9944.

Scrap tire rubber can also be used in playgrounds, running tracks, and plastic and rubber products. Engineering uses for scrap tires such as in retaining walls have also grown. The Scrap Tire Management Council, a trade association, also has information on scrap tire management and on new ways to reuse and recycle scrap tires. They can be reached at (202) 408-7783.

Enclosed are EPA's "*Summary of Markets for Scrap Tires*," and "*State Scrap Tire Programs: A Quick Reference Guide*," which you may also find helpful.

I hope this information is helpful to you.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth A. Cotsworth, Director
Office of Solid Waste

Enclosures

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