



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

September 9, 2008

OFFICE OF  
SOLID WASTE AND EMERGENCY  
RESPONSE

W. James Price  
9 Devon Hill Road  
Baltimore, MD 21210

Dear Mr. Price:

Thank you for your letter of August 3, 2008, to Administrator Stephen Johnson regarding plastic recycling and the resin identification codes that appears on the bottom of bottles. The Administrator has forwarded your letter to the Office of Solid Waste (OSW) for a response. I would like to commend you for your commitment to recycling and your diligence to ensure proper recycling.

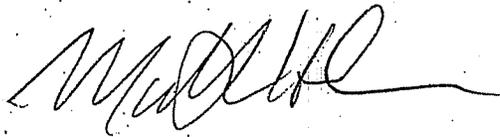
We share your concern for the environment and the problems posed by the icons on the bottom on plastic bottles. In fact we have been working with the plastics industry and bottling companies to make it easier for consumers like you to identify what is recyclable and what is not. EPA has developed several strategies, partnerships, and initiatives that involve plastics recycling, including:

- **Municipal Solid Waste Rebranding Campaign** is an initiative to develop a national consumer campaign to promote recycling. In 2006, EPA awarded a grant to the National Recycling Coalition (NRC) to lead this effort to update and unify recycling iconography, messages, and branding to make it less confusing to the consumer. A key part of this initiative is the review of recycling terminology and symbols. As the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) is currently undergoing a review of the existing green guidelines, NRC is working closely with FTC staff providing written comments on the use of recycling symbols on packaging. NRC is also participating in upcoming FTC public hearings reviewing the recycling symbols. Development of related web-based resources is delayed pending FTC's green guideline revisions.
- **Beverage Container Recycling Initiative** is a collaboration between EPA, state environmental agencies, beverage manufacturers, and the plastics, glass, and aluminum industries. This initiative seeks to develop a significant, sustainable, and long term commitment to increase beverage container collection and recycling.

- **Sustainable Packaging Coalition** is an industry working group of more than 150 companies, dedicated to transforming packaging into a system that encourages a sustainable flow of materials. EPA is a founding member and serves on the executive committee. This coalition represents all packaging materials, across the entire supply chain, working to define issues relating to the environmental footprint of packaging, and to suggest and implement solutions. We're working with the Coalition to identify and use innovative, functional packaging that promotes economic and environmental health. We've made really good progress in packaging recycling. From 2001 and 2005 the recycling rate for packaging material increased by 1.5 percent - and one percent of that increase occurred between 2003 and 2005. We are working actively with industry partners and state and local governments to ensure that the trend continues, by taking advantage of systems already in place, as well as designing and implementing new systems.

Thank you again for your letter. We will share your concerns about the size of the resin identification codes along to our workgroups. Recycling is one of the things we can do to help save energy, reduce climate change emissions, conserve resources, and save landfill space. We all can work to better the environment, and we hope that you continue to be a concerned and active citizen.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Hale", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Matt Hale, Director  
Office of Solid Waste