

POWER

An Elemental Impact Industry Working Group

Meeting Notes from January 24, 2011 POWER meeting held in conjunction with the U.S. Composting Council in Santa Clara, CA

For a list of meeting attendees, agenda and PPT presentations, visit the **2011 POWER Meetings** (<http://www.elementalimpact.org/2011POWERMeetings>) page.

After introductions, the meeting started with an overview of POWER – Perishable Organic Waste to Energy Recycles – given by Ei Founder & CEO Holly Elmore. The mission and content of past meetings were discussed (content available on the **POWER** (<http://www.elementalimpact.org/POWER>) page). Kendall Christiansen with **GaiaStrategies** mentioned the use of “highest good” in mission statement could cause problems and recommended reconsidering the term use.

There was a discussion about the use biobags in composting operations. It was noted that some composters do not permit biobags as they are slower to decompose and create a “fly-away” scenario with bag pieces in the windrow area. A comment was made that some of the newer bags are sturdier than the first generation.

The use of compostable products in school systems was discussed. In Atlanta most school systems switched to polystyrene plates and turned off their dishwashers during the drought conditions. Schools will access the water usage with re-usable plates, flatware & cups versus using compostable products.

Breaking News: The House of Representatives stopped the use of compostable products in their dining facilities. Was the decision a cost-saving action or politically motivated?

POWER is committed to action within the current infrastructure and technology available. Doug Kunnemann of NatureWorks and Co-Chair of the Sustainable Food Court Initiative introduced the SFCI project and invited attendees to get involved. His

presentation lists the challenges inherent in food court operations and the current team members.

Brenda Platt with the Institute for Local Self Reliance, Sustainable Biomaterials Collaborative, and the D.C. Area Organics Task Force presented on Organics Recovery and Biobased Materials: Opportunities for Corporate Involvement. Brenda gave an interesting history of biobased materials and emphasized reusable products were preferred to single-use.

Holly and Chris Moyer of the National Restaurant Association Conserve Program co-presented on Mobilizing the Foodservice Industry to Embrace Organics Collection. As the nation's largest private sector industry, the foodservice industry is the largest contributor to the estimated 31 million tons per annum of food residuals going to landfills.

Chris educated on the role the NRA can play by encouraging foodservice operators to join composting programs, creating training tools to prevent and eliminate contamination and using their political advocacy voice.

Brenda asked Chris about the NRA taking a stand on the current yard trimmings ban proposed legislation. Chris responded that the NRA is the foodservice industry's political voice and they could use their influence if supported by their members. Holly mentioned that Ei takes a neutral stand on all political issues.

There was discussion about a pre-determined acceptable contamination within the organics stream. The consensus was zero contamination tolerance is the acceptable stand as there will be a certain level of contamination in the best case scenarios.

Holly was asked to clarify the Ei/ZWZ/POWER relationship. Ei is a non-profit entity that committed to action through programs like ZWZ and POWER. POWER is an offshoot of the ZWZ as food residual collection for composting is one of the program's criteria. With POWER reviewing the available technologies for food residuals end use, ZWZ will reassess the destination requirement when appropriate. Anaerobic digesters and other waste to energy options are viable alternatives for the ZWZ criteria.

The meeting was adjourned with an invitation to attend the April 19 POWER meeting in Atlanta, GA.
