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Environmentalists
Allied for Recycling
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BEAR REAFFIRMS COST FINDINGS AND CHALLENGES BEVERAGE INDUSTRY TO COOPERATE IN FINDING SOLUTIONS

Collaborative, fact-based dialog is the key to acceptable recycling solutions.

Businesses and Environmentalists Allied for Recycling (BEAR), a project of Global Green USA, is dedicated to the principle that fact-based, collaborative dialog can lead to acceptable recycling solutions. This principle guided the Multi-Stakeholder Recovery Project (MSRP) and the associated report, *Understanding Beverage Container Recycling*. According to BEAR Chair Pierre Ferrari, “when the National Soft Drink Association (NSDA) issued a press statement seeking to discredit our report, we stuck to this principle. We asked our consulting team, including R.W. Beck, Inc., Franklin Associates, Ltd., the Tellus Institute, Sound Resource Management Group, Inc., and Boisson & Associates, to review in detail the NSDA-commissioned analysis of our findings prepared by Northbridge Environmental Management Consultants. And, we invited representatives of NSDA, Northbridge and Coca-Cola North America to discuss the analysis by phone.”

We stand firmly behind our cost estimates and the validity of our results, although we encourage continued data sharing to overcome disagreements.

The [attached MSRP consulting team response](#) clearly shows the MSRP cost conclusions are sound and that NSDA’s adjustments revising California costs up and curbside costs down are unsupported. In discussions NSDA and Northbridge argued that they added year-2000 non-operating expenditures to 1999 California redemption program operation costs because these efforts to spend down surplus funds are essential to the program. According to Mr. Ferrari, “we heartily reject this notion, and our analysis systematically separates operations costs from funding

A Project of



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mechanisms. We acknowledge that California's funding mechanisms are problematic and improving them should be a focus of future multi-stakeholder dialog."

BEAR challenges beverage industry and other stakeholders to continue to collaboratively search for feasible, efficient recycling solutions.

The MSRP Report provides a wealth of data that will likely continue to be interpreted for some time. NSDA, like others, has focused on one particular finding – the relatively low operations costs of the California Redemption Program. The MSRP report also acknowledges the legitimate concerns many have with this program, especially as it adjusts to its year-2000 expansion. To those truly interested in solutions, these two findings suggest an obvious question: How can programs be structured to emphasize low-cost recovery mechanisms as in California in a way that is acceptable to all players?

According to Matt Petersen, President and CEO of Global Green USA, "rather than attacking the California program or discrediting the MSRP findings, the beverage industry and other stakeholders should re-commit to collaboratively explore answers to this question." During the MSRP process a range of possible solutions were suggested, including the notion of voluntary, industry-operated funds that could cover collection costs and provide the necessary mix of incentives to sustain high recovery rates.

Is there a feasible solution that all stakeholders can accept? The answer will never be known unless the NSDA and other beverage industry representatives follow the example of Coca-Cola North America by participating in good faith in multi-stakeholder discussions. Businesses and Environmentalists Allied for Recycling pledges to promote, facilitate and participate in such balanced dialogs at every opportunity.

The report, *Understanding Beverage Container Recycling: A Value Chain Assessment Prepared for the Multi-Stakeholder Recovery Project, Stage One*, along with the Northbridge analysis and our response, are all available on Global Green USA's web site at www.globalgreen.org/bear. Global Green USA -- created in 1994 as an affiliate of Mikhail Gorbachev's Green Cross International -- works in cooperation with individuals, industry, and government to foster a global value shift toward a sustainable and secure future.

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