Resolution 10-1
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Santa Fe, New Mexico

As certified by
Ben Grumbles
Executive Director

NATIONAL SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS MANAGEMENT

WHEREAS, the use of materials such as metals, minerals, plastics and chemicals, fuels, lumber, agriculture plants and animals, and soil and rock form the foundation that underlies both the economy and the environment; and

WHEREAS, the use of renewable and non-renewable materials is significant and increasing, and includes associated energy and water use and consumption; and

WHEREAS, the increasing use of materials and subsequent waste generation have challenged society's ability to manage critical natural resources, the environmental impacts associated with waste management, and the climate impacts of production and consumption; and

WHEREAS, ECOS represents states, territories, and the District of Columbia, throughout this resolution the term "states" indicates states, territories, and the District of Columbia; and

WHEREAS, for more than 40 years, states and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) have implemented the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) to conserve resources and manage waste materials to minimize or eliminate the impacts of these waste materials on both the environment and public health; and

WHEREAS, in 2009 states and U.S. EPA collaborated on a roadmap, "Sustainable Materials Management: The Road Ahead," defining a framework in which to implement the life-cycle vision of sustainable materials management (SMM); and

WHEREAS, in 2016 U.S. EPA published a "Methodology for Evaluating Beneficial Uses of Industrial Non-Hazardous Secondary Materials" and a corresponding "Beneficial Use Compendium" providing a series of analytical steps to evaluate the beneficial use of such materials; and

WHEREAS, in 2017 ECOS established an SMM Workgroup to share and develop best practices for promoting sustainability and managing the built environment; and

WHEREAS, in 2021 U.S. EPA published a "National Recycling Strategy" that envisions improved markets for recycled commodities; increased collection and improved infrastructure; reduced contamination in the recycled materials stream; enhanced policies and programs to support circularity; and standardized measurement and increased data collection; and

WHEREAS, the current policy, economic, and market drivers do not adequately encourage SMM despite the fact that material use and associated environmental impacts, as well as waste produced, continue to increase in the United States, straining limited natural resources and the capacity for managing waste that also creates a financial burden for local governments; and

WHEREAS, a comprehensive approach to materials management that evaluates the use and impacts of materials throughout their life cycle can minimize the amount of materials used including energy and water, and climate and environmental impacts including the presence of toxic and hazardous constituents; and

WHEREAS, deriving full value from the materials that circulate through the U.S. economy – by reducing consumption and environmental impacts; promoting source reduction; and maximizing reuse through end-of-life management including durability and repair, recycling, and composting – creates jobs and supports sustainable economic vitality.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL OF THE STATES (ECOS):

Supports state efforts to address sustainable product design, consumption, and end-of-life materials management through the ECOS SMM Workgroup;

Requests that U.S. EPA continue to collaborate with states to incorporate SMM as an important strategic approach for addressing consumption and resource use, toxicity, climate change, and environmental impacts;

Continues to support safe, beneficial reuse of industrial secondary materials including for geotechnical and civil engineering purposes, and calls upon U.S. EPA to work with states and stakeholders to evaluate additional secondary materials and their appropriate beneficial uses;

Continues to support improved product design, reduced consumption, increased durability, and extended longevity of products, and the reuse, rental, and repair of products to reduce the demand for new production that requires additional material resource, energy, and water use, and the associated climate and environmental impacts;

Supports the robust use of the Toxic Substances Control Act and RCRA as tools to support SMM;

Requests that U.S. EPA engage states in its efforts to educate consumers, all levels of government, nongovernmental organizations, manufacturers, business, and other stakeholders about strengthening

markets for reuse and recycling and enhancing infrastructure and measurement for these markets, as outlined in the agency's America Recycles Day Summit documents;

Requests that U.S. EPA continue to work with states to integrate the use of life-cycle SMM and continue building on current core regulatory and partnership programs. This joint work will: provide needed research on materials and technology; advance decision tools that support life-cycle materials management; support a systematic method of measuring materials through their entire life cycles; promote appropriate accreditation of states that adopt a life-cycle management standard; and provide funding to assist states in building such standards into appropriate programs; and

Requests that U.S. EPA continue to involve states in activities surrounding SMM policy, measurement, and infrastructure development.