

**REMARKS BY SUSAN BODINE
RESOURCE CONSERVATION CHALLENGE WORKSHOP
CRYSTAL CITY
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Thank you, Maria.

I'm delighted to join with Jim Gulliford in welcoming all of you to Crystal City and this three-day workshop on the Resource Conservation Challenge, which in my view is one of EPA's most important – and effective – initiatives.

I'm particularly pleased because of the opportunity to share the stage with Ron Sims, our keynote speaker today. I visited King County Washington last fall as part of the School Cleanout Campaign, and I saw first-hand some of the local environmental action that Ron is leading, the kind of environmental action that we need to see in every American community. Like the rest of you, I'm looking forward to hearing what Ron has to say to us today.

When I looked over the workshop agenda, I was struck by how far the RCC has come in just a few short years. We launched the program in 2002 to help fulfill our responsibilities under the Resource Conservation and Recovery

Act and the Pollution Prevention Act. We wanted to do a better job conserving natural resources and energy, managing materials, and preventing pollution. We knew back then that resource conservation not only made sense environmentally, but it was crucially important for the economy as well. But I don't think anyone back in 2002 could have foreseen the broad spectrum of initiatives now underway under the RCC, nor how successful some of them have already been.

The track record to date has been very impressive. We're working in partnership with literally hundreds of companies and other organizations through programs like WasteWise and the National Partnership for Environmental Priorities. We have unique collaborations underway with WalMart, ARAMARK, the National Football League, and other federal agencies. Our 150 GreenScapes partners are incorporating sustainable landscaping into commercial as well as residential developments. Our Coal Combustion Products Partnership, now with more than 160 partners, is fostering the use of coal combustion products in transportation, green highways, and building construction. The School Chemical Cleanout program is encouraging academic institutions to remove outdated and unneeded toxic chemicals from the K-12 school environment. Plug-Into E-

cycling encourages, industry, governments, retailers, and citizens to recycle and reuse electronic equipment, and partners like Dell, Hewlett-Packard, HomeDepot, WalMart, GE, Subaru, and Staples are working hard to engage the public in electronics recycling.

Recently I helped kick off the "It's an Easy Call" campaign to improve the recycling of cell phones. We're concentrating on cell phone recycling because, on average, we replace our cell phones about every 18 months. So EPA teamed up with 11 cell phone manufacturers, retailers, and service providers to get the word out on cell phone recycling – it's ease, convenience, and importance. Just last week I joined with some of our partners in the mercury switch recovery program to celebrate the removal and recycling of the one millionth mercury switch from automobiles. We're working with the National Park Service to promote recycling and waste reduction throughout the National Park system.

One outcome of that partnership is EPA's involvement, through the voluntary participation of our employees, in collecting and recycling beverage containers during the National Cherry Blossom Festival here in Washington, DC. We've done that for two years in a row, and we're looking

forward to doing it again this year. You've been very busy for the last six years, and very productive. So as part of my welcome this morning, I want to thank all of you for your initiative, your imagination, and your plain old hard work.

Clearly, we have a lot of activity underway that is transforming how we manage materials. At the same time, it's vitally important that we measure the results of our efforts to drive change. And we're making good progress there, too. Many of you have used, or at least heard about, the Waste Reduction Model – we call it WARM. It's an EPA model that allows decision makers to estimate the energy and greenhouse gas benefits of alternative waste management scenarios. A companion calculator, the Recycled Content Tool, allows purchasers to estimate the benefit of increasing the recycled content of goods that they purchase. We have other tools under development, as do some of our partners, and you'll be hearing about them in a number of sessions throughout the workshop.

So what do these tools tell us about our progress so far? With respect to municipal solid waste, the nation's recycling rate has increased from 29 percent in 2000 to 32.5 percent in 2006. That 32.5 percent recycling rate

provided an energy conservation benefit of 1.3 quadrillion BTUs, the energy equivalent of 11.3 billion gallons of gasoline, or about 13 percent of U.S. residential energy consumption. In 2006, 345,000 tons of electronics were recycled. Of that, more than 172,000 tons consisted of CPUs, CRTs, LCDs, notebooks, and cell phones. The energy benefit of recycling those five categories of electronic waste was more than 6.5 trillion BTUs, equivalent to the energy content of nearly 53 million gallons of gasoline.

Between 2001 and 2006, the Coal Combustion Products Partnership helped increase the recycling of coal combustion ash from 32 percent to 43 percent, resulting in the beneficial use of 15 million tons of coal ash. This conserved 80 trillion BTUs of energy, which is equivalent to the annual energy consumption of more than 420,000 households. This is just a partial list of what the RCC has accomplished, but it gives a sense of how much you've changed the world through your hard work over the last six years.

But the main message I want to leave with you today is not about the past.

It's about the future. Where do we go from here?

In this room today are representatives from all of EPA's regional offices, 20 states, and 3 tribes, as well as other federal agencies, local governments,

NGOs, industry, and academia. You are the heart and soul of our national efforts to manage materials more wisely, and recycle used materials more extensively. You are the experts, the owners of the RCC yesterday, today, and tomorrow. The past success of the RCC is due to you, and any future success will be up to you.

So as you participate in this workshop over the next three days, I want you to think about what you want it to look like over the next decade. Who should the RCC work with in the future, where it should expand, and what materials might lend themselves to a concerted national effort at recycling and reuse. What are the targets of opportunity? Who needs to be involved? What are the potential benefits?

Now's a good time to begin thinking about the answers. Thank you, and I wish you all the best at this workshop, and in the years ahead.