

## DRIVING DEMAND (CONTINUED)

in garbage and carryout bags to 20% by 2025, through stepped increases. Under the group's recommendation, post-consumer film would include material collected in stores, at MRFs, on farms and from distribution centers.

The effort is not lobbying for a specific legislative proposal from any one government, but rather it is providing a blueprint for consideration by any rulemaking group.

"Each signatory is able to bring this document to local politicians and provide guidance on what would help the industry with this specific problem of an oversupply of plastic bags," said Eadaoin Quinn, director of business development and procurement for EFS-Plastics.

### PROCUREMENT DRIVING DEMAND

Besides the PCR mandate, the group is recommending procurement policy changes among governments and other large purchasers.

For example, when governments buy paper products, procurement guidelines frequently require some amount of post-consumer content. But for film products, it's less common to see recycled-content requirements in purchasing policies, according to the group.

Tara Stephen, who manages the waste management division for Peterborough County, Ontario, noted that purchasing policy carries a lot of weight. Governments must frequently select the cheapest option when making purchasing decisions, so without recycled-content language, virgin products often win.

A member of the coalition, Peterborough County accepts film, and although it is currently moving the material to a buyer, in general, the market for MRF film remains small.

"Being one of the municipalities that's still receiving plastic film in our program, we have a stake in having demand for the material and having a market for it," said Stephen.

A recycled-content requirement for large purchasing entities would tackle market development by organically increasing demand, while the recycled-content mandate approaches it from a regulatory standpoint.

If both of those forces are pushing for greater recycled film use, "we're a lot more likely to get movement," Stephen said. ■

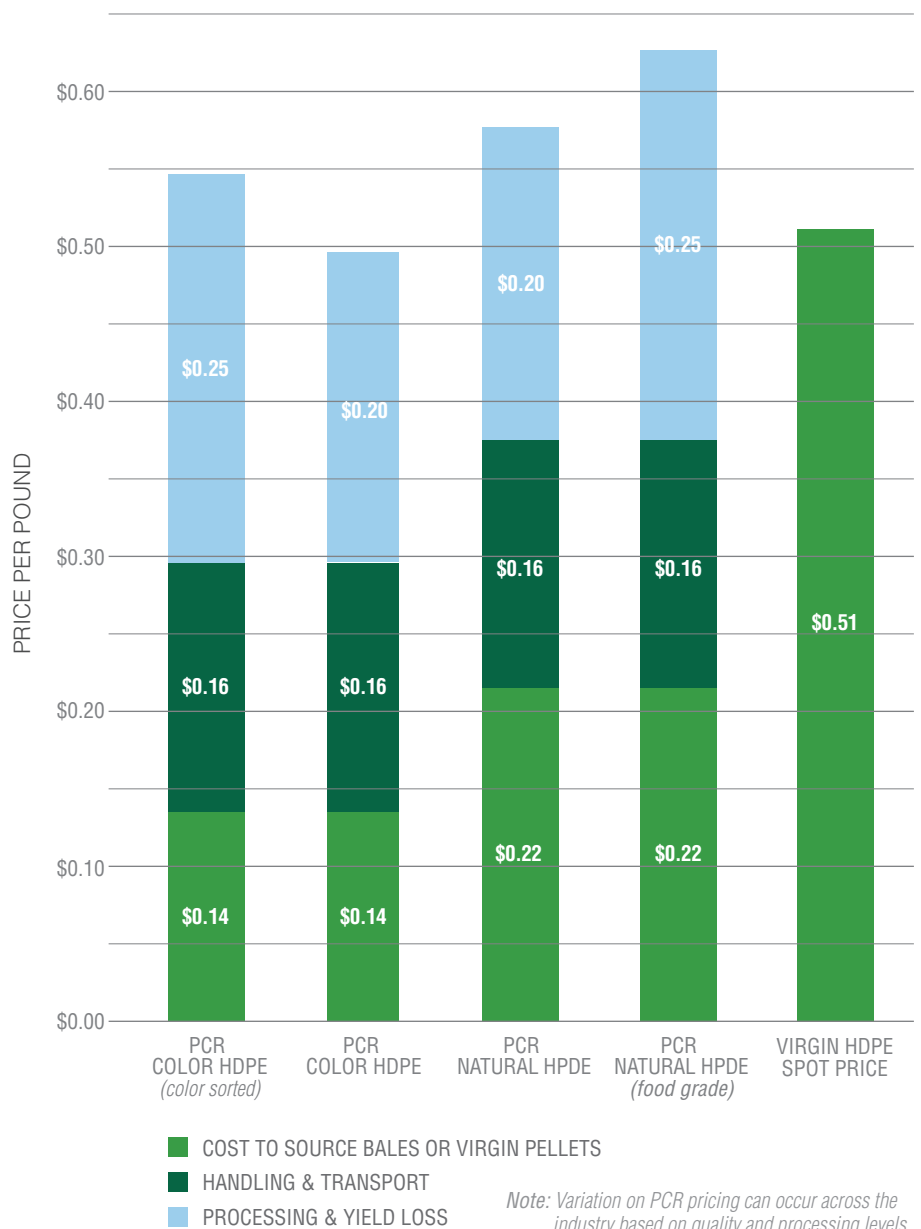
## DATA CORNER

### What accounts for the higher cost of PCR?

Historically, companies have used post-consumer resin (PCR) because it was a lower cost feedstock than virgin. In recent years, however, pricing for virgin plastic (mostly "wide spec" resin) has fallen below that of PCR (mostly high quality PCR that is suitable for food contact).

Developing PCR that can compete with virgin resin, in terms of performance or consistency in specifications, requires significant cost in handling and processing. The breakdown of those recycling costs for two common types of recycled plastic – color and natural HDPE – are shown in the bar graph. The numbers are based on interviews with various plastic reclaimers.

It's important to remember resin costs generally do not account for the environmental benefits from the use of PCR or the impacts of using virgin. For PCR to become a more attractive option, drivers beyond price will need to be taken into account by resin purchasers. ■



This month's Data Corner was produced by More Recycling. For additional information, go to [morerecycling.com](http://morerecycling.com).