

NEWS RELEASE

STUDY: PLASTIC PACKAGING ENABLES SIGNIFICANT ENERGY AND GREENHOUSE GAS SAVINGS IN U.S., CANADA

TORONTO (March 3, 2014) – A new study has determined that six major categories of plastic packaging help to significantly reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions compared to packaging alternatives made with other materials. The study, "[Impact of Plastics Packaging on Life Cycle Energy Consumption & Greenhouse Gas Emissions in the United States and Canada](#)," provides a transparent, detailed life cycle assessment that quantifies the energy and climate benefits of using various types of everyday plastic packaging compared to alternatives.

Prepared by Franklin Associates for the American Chemistry Council (ACC) and the Canadian Plastics Industry Association, the study assessed the energy requirements and greenhouse gas emissions of six general categories of plastic packaging produced and sold in the United States and Canada. These include caps and closures, beverage containers, other rigid containers, carrier (or shopping) bags, stretch/shrink wrap, and other flexible packaging.

"Plastic packaging enables the safe and efficient delivery of various products which form part of our daily lives, everything from food to essential health and safety aids. However, many are unaware that plastics carry out these functions while at the same time conserving energy and lowering greenhouse gas emissions. This study clearly articulates these benefits to sustainability," notes Carol Hochu, President & CEO of the Canadian Plastics Industry Association.

Study authors used life cycle assessment (LCA) methodology to compare current amounts of various plastic packaging products to packaging made with alternative materials. The findings were striking.

The assessment found that for the baseline year 2010, replacing all plastic packaging with non-plastic alternatives for these six types of packaging in Canada would:

- require almost 4.4 times as much packaging material by weight, increasing the amount of packaging used in Canada by nearly 5.5 million tonnes or 5.5 billion kilograms;
- increase energy use by 2.0 times – equivalent to the amount of oil transported by 18 supertankers; and
- result in 2.3 times more global warming potential – equivalent to adding 3.3 million more cars to our roads.

Similar calculations are available for the U.S. market.

"Plastics packaging is highly engineered enabling innovation in performance and reductions in material use resulting in enormous sustainability benefits throughout the entire life cycle, as this study shows. After use, plastics make further contributions to sustainability by being re-purposed through recycling or

recovered for its energy value and converted into a liquid oil, electricity and into other fuels". Great progress has been made. Over 70% of Canada's population has the opportunity to recycle all their plastic bottles; over 50% can recycle non-bottle containers; and, 60% can recycle polyethylene plastic film and bags. CPIA will continue its work with partners to expand on recovery efforts to realize greater savings, says Cathy Cirko, VP of the CPIA.

The study contains more than 50 tables and 16 charts and illustrations, and it examines the each of the major life cycle stages for packaging: raw material production, packaging fabrication, distribution transport, postconsumer disposal, and recycling.

The report is available in its entirety [here](#).

Data Chart: Plastic Packaging Reduces Mass, Energy Use & GHG Emissions available [here](#).

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The Canadian Plastics Industry Association is the national voice of Canada's plastics industry, representing the interests of processors, material suppliers, equipment manufacturers and brand owners across the country.

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