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Recycling Bins: Congressional Request to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for Standardized Labels

Walter Wright, Jr.

wwright@mwlaw.com

(501) 688.8839

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Seventeen members of Congress sent a September 23rd letter to the United States Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA") addressing recycling bin labels.

The Congressional members writing EPA Administrator Regan included:

- Alan S. Lowenthal
- Betty McCollum
- Paul D. Tonko
- Lisa Blunt Rochester
- Sean Casten
- Eleanor Holmes Norton
- Katie Porter
- Earl Blumenauer
- Salud Carbajal
- Jerrold Nadler
- Steve Cohen
- Sara Jacobs
- Jared Huffman
- Emanuel Cleaver, II
- Diana DeGette
- Mike Quigley
- Haley M. Stevens

They asked that EPA begin implementing standardized recycling bin labels.

The rationale for the request includes:

- 30% of Americans are not confident that waste deposited in recycling bins gets recycled
- 62% of Americans are concerned that a lack of knowledge causes them to recycle incorrectly
- Consumer confusion regarding waste sorting results in contaminated waste streams

Standardized labels for recycling and trash bins are cited as a remedy for these issues. The letter states in part that:

. . . The clear, standardized visuals work like road signs to show people what can be recycled in each bin. These labels can then be customized to suit the capacity of recycling plants in each municipality,

educating consumers on what can and cannot go into every individual recycling can. There are now more than 9 million standardized labels on recycling and compost bins across the country.

Examples are provided of the standardized labels being utilized with what is described as "huge economic and environmental success."

Finally, it is noted that EPA has already recognized the need for standardized labels by including them in the National Recycling Strategy under Objective C.

A copy of the letter can be downloaded [here](#).