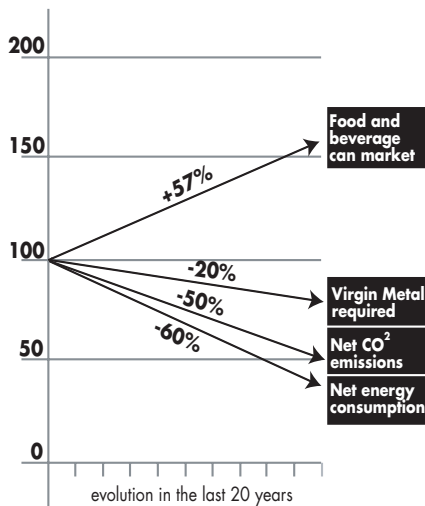


Will it help?

Some thoughts from the metal packaging industry concerning the European Parliament's recent vote on the Waste Framework Directive.

We're a little confused. After 20 years of aggressive recycling, reduced emissions and increased energy efficiency, we believe we're on the right path to a sustainable future. But the current version of the Waste Framework Directive may actually slow down our industry's substantial progress in this direction.



Given our industry's successful efforts to achieve sustainability through recycling, we are puzzled by a Directive that would effectively discourage recycling by placing it at a lower rank than reuse in a rigid hierarchy of waste. Logically, the most effective legislation would take into account the specificity of each sector, its products and its supply chain. (Rigid metal packaging is designed to recycle the material: the packaging product cannot be reused.)

Promote recycling

When it comes to better environmental efficiency, recycling is a proven path. We share in the disappointment voiced by Friends of the Earth Europe and the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) that the Directive does not do enough in its current form to promote recycling. For, as they pointed out in their reaction to the vote:

"Recent studies confirm that recycling not only saves precious resources such as metals, forests and oil - it also reduces climate emissions, as recycling is more energy efficient than manufacturing from virgin materials."*

Renewable is as good as reusable

Aluminum and steel can be said to be recycled in a "material to material loop" - that is, aluminum to aluminum and steel to steel to produce new packaging or other products. Metals can be recycled an infinite number of times without loss of quality. Because of this, metals in use can be considered a renewable material; they are a valuable resource, too precious to waste.

Recycling and reuse should be equivalent in terms of environmental impact in any guiding scheme. Both processes are geared towards

completely different resource/product cycles and are therefore complementary.

Ranking reuse higher than recycling in terms of environmental impact is counter to the directive's environmental objectives. We therefore support a flexible framework, where recycling is optimised and stimulated as it is a proven method for reaching the Sustainability summit.

* Friends of the Earth Europe/EEB press release, 28 November 2006.



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