



Role of Thrift Stores – Material Reuse Forum 13

Hello from Waterbury, CT. Where is everyone tuning in from today?

- Hello from Portland, ME!
- Cheers! Omaha, NE
- Hello from the University of Pittsburgh!
- Minneapolis, MN
- Hello! Philadelphia
- Hi from Newton, MA :)
- Also checking in from Portland, ME 😊
- Greetings from Boston!
- Greetings from Urbana, Illinois 🙌
- Haverhill MA
- Eden Prairie, Minnesota!
- Gaithersburg, Maryland
- Good Afternoon! Dalton, GA
- West Springfield, MA
- Maryam Kamangar, Goodwill Industries of the Berkshires and Southern Vermont - Pittsfield, MA
- Auburn, WA
- Ada County Landfill, Boise Idaho

Comment: If only AI could be made to assist with the Sorting! Lol

- It has been! <https://www.valvan.com/en/solutions/textile-sorting-recycling>

Question: who here is wearing something secondhand right now?

Question: Any fashion brands/ companies in the industry that utilize fiber identification and are excelling within, improving zero waste narrative and tracking of textile production?

Comment: Fiber shed in Southeast Ohio partners with Hocking Hills Garment center to manufacturer garments from the ground up. They are lovely just wanted to boost them up in here!

Question: I get some bedding foam/ memory foam in our textile bin, is that something that is recycled or is it thrown away? And if there is a better place for it, where should I send it?

Question: Is there any exploration or is it even feasible to integrate textile repair technology for job, training, resale of refurbished textiles? I'm thinking of sewing rips, patching, etc.

Question: Giana & Sunnie: Do you offer the community information on how to recycle items properly, especially if their items are not acceptable?

- From Giana & Sunnie, MTW: Yes, we do our best to. We have an ongoing list of other nonprofits and stores who will take donations or consign items (especially furniture, used linens/towels) that we cannot take. For example, Savers, Habitat Restores, and local animal shelters.
- From Wendy Dunlap: Fixit Clinic in Long Beach now offers an area to repair for clothes and other items to keep out of landfills.

Comment: Big Brothers Big Sisters accepts ripped, torn, rag type stuff as long as it's clean

Comment: Helpsy also takes everything as long as it's clean. I wonder if others do.

Comment: St. Pauly too... as long as it's clean. we use them at Tompkins County Recycling and Materials Management (NY)

Comment: SMART has advised for years that torn, worn OK as long as not smelly or moldy. Textile vendors in MA concurred before the state promoted.

Comment: Sorters and Grading companies take the less than desirable clothing. They sell to companies like ours to recycle. Recycling companies are always looking for the ripped, torn, and stained items. We also take mattress materials and textile scraps from manufacturing

Question: Is anyone following the chain of custody for the clothes that are exported overseas? I am concerned we have so many clothes being exported now I would hate to think it is being greenwashed like plastic exports.

Comment: I've heard that these bales for recycling which are sent overseas often end up being thrown away overseas

Comment: <https://www.aljazeera.com/gallery/2021/11/8/chiles-desert-dumping-ground-for-fast-fashion-leftovers>

Comment: Watch Buy Now on Netflix. It's a documentary on textile waste in addition to other consumer information. Some Countries are banning textile imports.

Question: how can we provide the resource to these major companies within the fashion industry to utilize fiber identification? You might have touched on this

Question: Does anyone know of a trustworthy circularity credential for textiles, similar to R2 for electronics?

Comment: Eileen Fisher here in Irvington NY takes back any of its own clothing and either resells it or, if beyond repair, repurposes the textiles in things like decorative pillows and handbags. They also offer a repair service for their own clothing.

Comment: In the Twin Cities, there is a big emphasis on repair culture. The county and cities provide free fix-it clinics on a regular basis.

Comment: Also, here in the Hudson Valley we have an extensive network of Repair Cafes where volunteers repair many things including textiles and teach people how to repair their own.

Comment: There is a company in Boise that recycles mattresses! \$20/mattress

Comment: One of NERC's members recycles mattresses, you can check their website and see their process <https://mattressrecyclingcouncil.org/>

Comment: I work with a lot of mattress recycling companies. Depending on your region is where you can safely send. Companies like a Bedder World just leads you to disposal companies not recycling

Comment: We have had success hosting a Mend & Swap Repair Cafe in Orange County, Florida Mend & Swap Repair Cafe Tickets, Saturday, June 6 • 12 PM - 4 PM | Eventbrite. The repair cafe sessions were FULL at our last event. Secondhand Shops | Orange County EcoMap

Comment: UTEC will take memory foam mattress toppers, as long as the same fee is paid, as if it were a mattress.

Question: How do I find reputable textile recycling options in Vermont?

- From Mariane Medeiros, NERC : Replying to "How do I find reputable textile recycling options in Vermont?"
 - ERT

Comment: ASTM used to stand for American Society for Testing and Materials

- From Robert Wadley: Currently known as ASTM International...like you said, it doesn't stand for anything anymore since the "A" is unnecessary now due to being international

Comment: Second Chance Recycling in the Twin Cities recycles mattresses. They are a social enterprise under the nonprofit, Emerge. <https://www.secondchancerecyclingmn.com/>. All this to say there are creative ways of realizing opportunities for recycling specific products, like mattresses.

Question: What is the basic call to action for the attendees of this webinar, other than to share this valuable information?

Comment: The waste dumping narrative has been definitively debunked. It is a legitimate and well-controlled trade of commercially demanded commodities. Please see the following:

- <https://smepprogramme.org/resources-1/secondhand-clothing-markets/>
- <https://wasteaid.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/A-STUDY-OF-TEXTILE-WASTE-AT-OWINO-MARKET-KAMPALA-2024.pdf>
- https://www.garsonshaw.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Study-GS-SHC-Imports-to-Guatemala_2025.pdf
- <https://smepprogramme.org/used-textiles-in-practice-trade-impacts-and-development-pathways/>

Comment: When those are attached to bottles, the bottles become contamination because the bottle is now too heavy to proceed through the system correctly. That "test" is flawed by default.

Comment: That is an interesting point. I read a study that attached 12 air tags to different plastic bag drop-off locations at retailers and there were mixed results. This makes sense as to why it was so mixed

Comment: To Giana and Sunnie's point, even in the US, MRF's are struggling to keep up with contamination and upgrades cost millions of dollars, which impacts their ability to produce quality bails that can be sold to recyclers

Comment: More about the debunked myth about waste dumping:

https://www.linkedin.com/posts/reuse-news_we-set-out-to-get-to-the-bottom-of-the-textile-activity-7479851178781159424-ExGK?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop&rcm=ACoAAAIb4DMBhRWCFUcAxQd mHHuC-f_vsSYeUU

Comment: https://www.linkedin.com/posts/reuse-news_textilewaste-circularity-activity-7472663891093663744-tOSi?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop&rcm=ACoAAAIb4DMBhRWCFUcAxQd mHHuC-f_vsSYeUU

Comment: And as an add on to the chem recycling question, what kind of chemical recycling is being used? there are many types of chemical recycling (i.e. pyrolysis, enzymolysis, etc)

- From Janet Edwards: I saw a presentation from University of Washington about their process: <https://digital.lib.washington.edu/server/api/core/bitstreams/8b920780-5947-43ab-9cd3-eb000c15e4f3/content>

Comment: SCS just release a standard on chemical recycling:

<https://www.scsstandards.org/standards/certification-standard-responsible-chemical-recycling>

Question: Has anyone obtained a life cycle analysis on any of these chemical recycling processes that haven't been produced by the recycler?

Comment: <https://www.no-burn.org/> chemical recycling is not a currently viable technology. They take a lot of energy and produce many toxins. They don't like mixes of feedstock. They mostly make feedstock into fuels but it is cheaper to get virgin fuels that are heavily subsidized. This is not "Recycling" at best it is down cycling.

- From Claire Galkowski: That is true for some types of chemical recycling, but certain types of enzymolysis show promise to be superior to mechanical recycling in some cases

Comment: Chemical recycling is complicated. It partly seems like another way to allow the plastic industry to continuously produce more than needed. Personally, I think there needs to be more restrictions on production, hence more EPR laws. However, it's interesting that at a time where EPR laws are becoming more popular and companies are trying to anticipate how this will impact production/profits, they are so pro chemical recycling

Comment: REPORT | Chemical Recycling: A Dangerous Deception
<https://www.beyondplastics.org/publications/chemical-recycling>

Comment: Be aware that air tags have lithium batteries, which can create problems in the materials that you are tracking. Also air tags can fall off or get crushed as the materials are processed. While the idea of using tags, it's not a reliable or safe way to try to track materials.

Comment: Two Things Sustainability Experts Want You to Do About Fast Fashion
<https://www.vegetariantimes.com/life-garden/sustainability/what-is-fast-fashion/> Source for 88% of US clothing purchasing is fast fashion.

Question: Can someone talk about what's happening with PFAS compounds in textiles and how the presence of these forever chemicals impacts recycling of the materials? Are we just recycling these chemicals through the recycling process?

- From Marisa Bisram: PFAS contamination is a major problem when considering reuse of high-performance textiles (body armor, fire protection). Right now, the aramid industries try to identify if the contaminant is present and sort it out of the reuse cycle. I am not too familiar on if similar occurs for consumer textiles
- From Janet Edwards: There is a book called To Dye For that outline's toxins in textiles. PFAS is mentioned. Here is an interview with the author:
<https://www.npr.org/2023/07/19/1188343293/is-toxic-fashion-making-us-sick-a-look-at-the-chemicals-lurking-in-our-clothes>

Comment: "Chemical Recycling" Is a Toxic Trap
Chemical recycling is mostly plastic incineration and generates significant hazardous waste and pollution. <https://www.nrdc.org/resources/chemical-recycling>

Comment: Safety of recycled plastics and textiles: Review on the detection, identification and safety assessment of contaminants

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0045653522036682>

Comment: <https://resource-recycling.com/recycling/2023/01/23/study-compares-chemical-mechanical-recycling-methods/>