

## **New recycling group forms in wake of NRC/KAB merger**

Aug. 5 -- Amidst fears that the proposed merger of the National Recycling Coalition with Keep America Beautiful will eliminate a voice for recyclers, the two top leaders of NRC's Recycling Organization Council are forming a new nationwide non-profit recycling organization.

Recycling Organizations of North America announced Aug. 3 that it has filed for papers of incorporation in Colorado, to create a group that would have a "larger umbrella" that would be afforded by the proposed merger of NRC and KAB, which is opposed by a number of influential former NRC board members.

Five state recycling organizations have endorsed the NRC-KAB merger: the Arizona Recycling Coalition, the Georgia Recycling Coalition, the Indiana Recycling Coalition, Professional Recyclers of Pennsylvania and the State of Texas Alliance for Recycling.

Marjorie Griek, executive director of the Colorado Association for Recycling, who is also the immediate past chair of the NRC Recycling Organization Council, and John Frederick, executive director for the Professional Recyclers Pennsylvania and vice chair for the Recycling Organization Council, are spearheading the formation of RONA.

The announcement about RONA was made the day before an Aug. 4 open forum town hall meeting at the California Resource Recovery Association meeting in Rancho Mirage, Calif., which was designed to give NRC members an opportunity to discuss the pros and cons of the proposed merger.

Members will vote electronically on the merger between Aug. 10 and Aug. 26.

RONA said it hopes to attract as members recycling professionals, state recycling organizations, regional recycling groups, sustainability groups and recycling companies. "RONA is rising from growing concern among past and current recycling leadership for change," said the press release announcing RONA's formation.

Three weeks ago, several former board members and past presidents of the NRC urged NRC members to vote against the proposed merger with KAB.

"This proposed takeover will eliminate NRC as an independent voice for recycling" and leave recyclers with "just a limited advisory role in an organization that has historically failed to support the structural changes that are essential if progressive recycling policies are to be adopted in this country," said Clifford Case, former NRC president and founder of the Save the NRC Coalition. His comments were from a July 9 letter to acting NRC executive director Ed Skernolis and acting NRC board president Melinda Uerling. "This is precisely the wrong way to go."

CRRA also is opposed to the merger, which needs a two-thirds majority vote of NRC's estimated 4,500 members to be approved.

Both CRRA and the Save the NRC Coalition, which includes more than 50 influential NRC members, object to the merger, arguing that NRC and KAB have different agendas because their membership bases are different.

"While local KAB affiliates independently mean well, the KAB Corporate is a bad match for NRC," said Pat Farrell Franklin, former NRC board member and retired executive director and founder of the Container Recycling Institute. NRC is a coalition of federal, state, and local governments, scrap recyclers, haulers, waste-generating businesses, nonprofit organizations, colleges, universities and environmental groups.

Under the merger plans accepted by the NRC board on June 10, KAB would obtain all NRC trademarks, rights and intellectual property and some of its programs, including CollegeMania. In exchange, KAB would assume responsibility for NRC debt of roughly \$500,000, establish an NRC Advisory Council and allocate three seats from its 25-member board of directors for people recommended by that council.

Save the NRC urged members to turn down the proposed merger with KAB, so that NRC could study several other options, including:

\* A Chapter 11 bankruptcy that would enable them to reorganize its debts and its priorities.

\* Operating again as an all-volunteer organization that contracts out all services, including its Web site, its annual conference and operating an open two-way listserv for members.

\* Dissolving completely, regardless of whether another broad-based organization committed to NRC's current goals arises from its ashes.

\* Merging with an organization other than KAB.

In addition to Franklin and Case, other key members of the Save the NRC Coalition include:

\* Former NRC board member Tim Brownell, who is co-president and chief operating officer of Eureka Recycling in Minneapolis, Minn.

\* Former NRC board president Gary Liss, who is president and managing director of the environmental consulting firm Gary Liss & Associates in Loomis, Calif.

\* Former NRC board member Amy Perlmutter, who is a fellow at the Lowell Center for Sustainable Production at the University of Massachusetts-Lowell.

\* Former NRC board president Mark Lichtenstein, who is now managing director of the Center of Excellence in Environmental and Energy Systems at Syracuse University

\* Floyd Flexon, president and chief executive officer of Plastic Environmental Technology LLC

\* NRC past president Susan Hubbard, who is CEO and co-president of Eureka Recycling.

\* Former NRC board member and policy committee chairman, Peter Anderson, who is president of RecycleWorlds Consulting Corp. in Madison, Wisc.

\* Steve Apotheker, senior recycling planner for the Sustainability Center at Metro in Portland, Ore.

\* Former board members Mick Barry, Victor Bell, Paul Braasch, Walt Childress, Delyn Kies, Susan Kinsella, Mark Loughmiller and Peter Pasterz.

\* Former NRC past president Dale Gubbels.

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