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Negative list of packaging characteristics will prevent a circular economy for packaging

Afera, the European Adhesive Tape Association, fully supports the objectives of the revision of the Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive to contribute to the effective functioning of the internal market while reducing the impact of packaging and packaging waste on the environment and human health.

We consider that the definition of recyclability of packaging, as well as the process to assess the recyclability of packaging must be **technology and material agnostic**. Therefore, **we strongly oppose the inclusion of a “negative list of packaging characteristics”** in the text of the new legislation. **A generic list of this sort cannot be comprehensive, science-based and future-proof**. It assumes that anecdotal evidence fully describes state-of-the-art recycling processes, overlooking recent and ongoing developments in manufacturing and recycling of packaging. In fact, **packaging featuring several of the suggested “characteristics” is recyclable and is currently recycled in practice**.

A generic “negative list” **conflicts with the establishment of Design for Recycling criteria** that account for the compatibility of packaging materials and components in material- and format-specific recycling processes in an **effective and non-discriminatory manner**. These criteria are already being established by cross-sector cooperative projects, and can be further made fit-for-purpose with a broader set of stakeholders within an Expert Group, the Packaging Forum. In our opinion, the definition of performance classes for packaging components within each of the packaging categories would result in the same effect that is intended by a “negative list”, but with a **more certain and science-based approach**. Any definition of a “negative list” prior to the establishment of comprehensive Design for Recycling criteria would be **premature and fail to provide regulatory certainty for business**, severely **discouraging ongoing investments** in developing materials, components and recycling for existing and future packaging solutions, thus impeding the development of a circular economy for packaging.

We therefore encourage the European Commission to **refrain from including a “negative list”** and instead **emphasise the development of parameters to ensure comprehensive Design for Recycling criteria** in the upcoming Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation. This approach will ensure that packaging placed in the EU market is compatible with the recycling streams in place, contribute to effective recycling of packaging waste in high rates, and yield high quality secondary raw materials to enable a true circular economy.

Cordially,



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