



OUTREACH AND SCREENING TO PROMOTE REDUCTION OF TOXIC HEAVY METALS IN PACKAGING

**Resource Conservation Challenge Grant Program
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 1**

With funding from U.S. EPA New England, the Toxics in Packaging Clearinghouse (TPCH) continues its outreach and testing of packaging aimed at reducing the amount of toxic heavy metals entering solid waste and recycling streams. This project addresses and builds on the results of the [2005-2006 TPCH packaging screening project](#) that documented a significant amount of retail packaging containing heavy metals restricted by state toxics in packaging laws. Nineteen U.S. states have toxics in packaging requirements that restrict the use of lead, cadmium, mercury and hexavalent chromium in packaging and packaging components.

This project has two components. First, TPCH will conduct outreach to manufacturers, distributors, and retail establishments selling or distributing packaged products in TPCH member states in New England (CT, ME, NH, RI) to inform them about state toxics in packaging restrictions and the documented prevalence of restricted heavy metals in packaging materials sold in the U.S. Outreach efforts will target material, packaging, and product sectors identified as having a higher likelihood of non-compliance as a result of the 2005-2006 TPCH compliance-screening project. For example, two major targets for outreach will include manufacturers, distributors, retail establishments, and their trade organizations selling or distributing imported flexible PVC bags/pouches used to package home furnishings, toiletries, pet supplies and inexpensive toys, and shopping and mailing bags.

Screening packaging to determine the total concentration of restricted heavy metals and potential non-compliance with state toxics in packaging laws is the second component of this project. Packaging, mostly from the retail sector, will be screened in early 2008 using an x-ray fluorescence analyzer. The screening component will accomplish two objectives; the test results: 1) will assist the TPCH in evaluating the effectiveness of outreach efforts begun following the 2005-2006 screening project by comparing test results from similar packages, and ultimately the removal of these heavy metals from the solid waste stream; and 2) will help TPCH identify where further outreach efforts are needed. Similar to the earlier screening project, companies selling or distributing potentially non-compliant packages will be notified and asked to submit a Certificate of Compliance demonstrating compliance with state requirements or submit an action plan to address non-compliant packages.