3. Technical Assistance

As noted throughout the notice, FTA continues to rely on several of the existing program circulars for general program guidance. FTA is continuing to update the program circulars, with an opportunity for notice and comment where warranted, to reflect amendments to chapter 53 of title 49, U.S.C. made by IIJA. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact FTA. FTA headquarters and regional staff will be pleased to answer your questions and provide any technical assistance you may need to apply for FTA program funds and manage the grants you receive. At its discretion, FTA may also use program oversight consultants to provide technical assistance to recipients on a case-by-case basis. This notice and the program guidance circulars previously identified in this document may be accessed via the FTA website at *https://www.transit.dot.gov/.*

G. Grant Management

1. Grant Reporting

Recipients of FTA funds are reminded that all FTA recipients are required to report on their grants and that it is critical to ensure reports demonstrate that reasonable progress is being made on the project. At a minimum, all awards require a Federal Financial Report (FFR) and a Milestone Progress Report (MPR) on an annual basis, with some reports required quarterly or monthly depending on the recipient and the type of projects funded under the grant. The requirements for these reports and other reporting requirements can be found in FTA Circular 5010.1E, *Grant Management Requirements,* dated July 16, 2018. FTA staff, auditors, and contractors rely on the information provided in the FFR and MPR to review and report on the status of both financial and project-level activities contained in the grant. It is critical that recipients provide accurate and complete information in these reports and submit them by the required due date. Failure to report or demonstrate reasonable progress on projects can result in suspension or premature close-out of a grant.

2. Inactive Grants and Grant Closeout

In FY 2023, FTA will continue to focus on inactive grants and grants that do not comply with reporting requirements. If appropriate, FTA will take action to close out and deobligate funds from these grants if reasonable progress is not being made. The efficient use of funds will further FTA's fulfillment of its mission to provide efficient and effective public transportation systems for the nation.

At the end of Federal Fiscal Year 2023, FTA will identify the list of grants that were awarded on or prior to September 30, 2020, have had no funds disbursed or have not had a disbursement since September 30, 2022. FTA Regional Offices will contact grant recipients with grants that meet these criteria to notify them that FTA intends to close the grant and deobligate any remaining funds unless the recipient can provide information that demonstrates that the projects funded by the grant remain active and the recipient has a realistic schedule to expedite completion of the projects funded in the grant.

3. Transportation Investments Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER), Better Utilizing Investments To Leverage Development (BUILD) and Rebuilding American Infrastructure With Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Discretionary Grants

Recipients of open TIGER, BUILD and RAISE grants should be aware that, as a matter of law, all remaining TIGER funds must be disbursed from grants by the end of the fifth fiscal year after the Expiration of Obligation Authority. (See, 31 U.S.C. 1552.) For FTA TIGER VII projects, that deadline was extended to the end of FY 2023. For FTA TIGER VIII projects, that deadline is the end of FY 2024. Accordingly, once ECHO closes for disbursements in late September 2023 (September 2024 for TIGER VIII), all undisbursed funds within FTA TIGER VII-funded grants will no longer be available to the recipient. These undisbursed funds will be deobligated from the grant. Even if a recipient has incurred costs or disbursed funds prior to the close of ECHO, if the recipient has not actually drawn down the funds by the time ECHO closes, FTA will be unable to reimburse the recipient. Therefore, recipients with open TIGER VIII grants must ensure project activities are completed and all funds are drawn down before ECHO closes by late September 2024 (September 2023 for TIGER VII).

For more information about the Transportation Investments Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER), Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) and Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Discretionary Grants program, contact Victor Waldron, Office of Transit Programs at (202) 366–5183 or *victor.waldron@dot.gov.*

The contents of this document do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way. This document is intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies. Recipients should refer to applicable regulations and statutes referenced in this document.

Nuria I. Fernandez,

Administrator.

[FR Doc. 2023–07761 Filed 4–13–23; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–57–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration

[Docket No. PHMSA–2022–0111 (Notice No. 2022–14)]

Hazardous Materials: Request for Feedback on Recycled Plastics Policy

AGENCY: Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Notice; request for information.

SUMMARY: PHMSA is publishing this notice to: (1) solicit information pertaining to how the potential use of recycled plastic resins in the manufacturing of specification packagings may affect hazardous materials transportation safety; (2) ensure transparency of its current policy pertaining to the use of recycled plastics in the manufacturing of specification packagings; (3) seek input on this policy to better inform potential regulatory changes; and (4) gather information for the evaluation of future approval requests and to better inform decisions pertaining to potential regulatory revisions and other related work.

DATES: Interested parties are invited to submit comments on or before July 13, 2023. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent possible.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments identified by the Docket Number PHMSA–2022–0111 by any of the following methods:

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal: http://www.regulations.gov.* Follow the instructions for submitting comments.
- *Fax:* 1–202–493–2251.
- *Mail:* Docket Management System; U.S. Department of Transportation, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12–140, Routing Symbol M–30, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590.
- *Hand Delivery:* Docket Management System; Room W12–140 on the ground floor of the West Building, 1200 New

Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except federal holidays.

Instructions: All submissions must include the agency name and Docket Number (PHMSA–2022–0111) for this notice. To avoid duplication, please use only one of these four methods. All comments received will be posted without change to the Federal Docket Management System (FDMS) and will include any personal information you provide.

Docket: For access to the dockets to read background documents or comments received, go to *http://www.regulations.gov* or DOT's Docket Operations Office (see **ADDRESSES**).

Privacy Act: In accordance with 5 U.S.C. 553(c), DOT solicits comments from the public. DOT posts these comments, without edit, including any personal information the commenter provides, to *http://www.regulations.gov,* as described in the system of records notice (DOT/ALL–14 FDMS), which can be reviewed at *http://www.dot.gov/privacy.*

Confidential Business Information (CBI): CBI is commercial or financial information that is both customarily and actually treated as private by its owner. Under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 U.S.C. 552), CBI is exempt from public disclosure. If your comments responsive to this notice contain commercial or financial information that is customarily treated as private, that you actually treat as private, and that is relevant or responsive to this notice, it is important that you clearly designate the submitted comments as ''CBI.'' Please mark each page of your submission containing CBI as ''PROPIN.'' Submissions containing CBI should be sent to Ryan Larson, Standards and Rulemaking Division, 202–366–8553, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590–0001. Any commentary that PHMSA receives which is not specifically designated as CBI will be placed in the public docket for this notice.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Ryan Larson, Office of Hazardous Materials Safety, Standards and Rulemaking Division, 202–366–8553, email: *ryan.larson@dot.gov,* or Glenn Foster, Office of Hazardous Materials Safety, Standards and Rulemaking Division, 202–366–8553, email: *glenn.foster@dot.gov,* Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590–0001.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Purpose

PHMSA is publishing this notice to (1) solicit information pertaining to how the potential use of recycled plastic resins in the manufacturing of specification packagings may affect hazardous materials transportation safety; (2) ensure transparency of its current policy pertaining to the use of recycled plastics in the manufacturing of specification packagings; (3) seek input on this policy to better inform potential regulatory changes; and (4) gather information for the evaluation of future approval requests and to better inform decisions pertaining to potential regulatory revisions and other related work.

II. Background

Plastic production contributes to planet-warming greenhouse gas emissions at every point in its life cycle. The process of drilling for plastic's source materials (oil and gas) includes methane leaking and flaring, and is often combined with clearing forests and wetlands that otherwise would have sequestered carbon. In addition, greenhouse gases are created from the processes that turn oil and gas into plastic. The process of recycling materials—especially recycling plastics—plays a vital role in combating climate change and reducing the amount of plastic waste in landfills. For example, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) states on its website that in 2018, plastic generation totaled 35.7 million tons in the United States, which was 12.2 percent of the municipal solid waste.[1]

PHMSA is aware through its participation in the development of international standards and regulations that an increasing number of countries are interested in expanding the use of recycled plastics in plastic packagings manufactured for hazardous materials. For example, the European Commission is considering a proposal with minimum targets for recycled content in certain plastic packaging, such as 30 percent by 2030 and 65 percent by 2040.[2]

Plastic packagings perform an integral role in ensuring that hazardous materials are transported safely and securely. Plastics are a vital source material for the manufacture of packaging used to transport hazardous materials around the world. Plastic is used to manufacture drums, jerricans, non-bulk composite packagings, and composite intermediate bulk containers (IBCs)—as well as some inner packagings that are part of combination packagings.

Consistent with the Administration's goals of reducing climate pollution and reducing the effects of per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) on communities across the United States,[3] PHMSA is committed to taking actions that may extend the life cycle of existing plastic, including through reuse and recycling, and reduce the need for new plastics to limit the production of PFAS. Further, Section 207 of Executive Order 14057, ''Catalyzing Clean Energy Industries and Jobs Through Federal Sustainability,'' directs federal agencies to advance pollution prevention, support markets for recycled products, and promote a transition to a circular economy.[4]

Increasing the use of recycled plastics in packagings is one potential avenue to innovate within this complex issue. Further, advances in technology and operational cleaning processes may allow for new plastic articles to maintain high levels of consistency in the quality of the plastics at a molecular level and offer the potential for growth in the use of recycled plastics, including for the manufacture of plastic packagings used for hazardous materials.

III. PHMSA's Current Policy on Recycled Plastics

While PHMSA has been committed to increasing the use of recycled plastics in packaging, it has traditionally taken an approach that corresponded to its understanding of the industry's ability to implement sufficient quality control actions to maintain packaging standards. The Hazardous Materials Regulations (HMR; 49 CFR parts 171–180) require approval from the Associate Administrator for Hazardous Materials Safety or a special permit to use recycled plastics in certain packagings [5] to transport hazardous

[1] Plastics: Material-Specific Data | US EPA.

[2] *https://environment.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-11/Proposal%20for%20a%20Regulation%20on%20packaging%20and%20packaging%20waste.pdf.*

[3] FACT SHEET: Biden-Harris Administration Launches Plan to Combat PFAS Pollution | The White House.

[4] 86 FR 70935 (Dec. 8, 2021).

[5] In accordance with the HMR, no used material other than production residues or regrind from the same manufacturing process may be used in the manufacture of specification plastic packagings unless approved by the Associate Administrator. See § 178.509(b)(1) for plastic drums and jerricans, § 178.522(b)(1) for composite packagings with inner

Continued

materials. *See* 49 CFR 107.105 and 107.705. PHMSA has not exempted plastic packagings manufactured from recycled plastic resins from applicable performance testing specifications as required by Part 178, Subparts M or O of the HMR. Since 1997, PHMSA has issued approximately 10 approvals permitting manufacturers of plastic packagings to use recycled plastic resins provided strict controls are followed to ensure the quality of the packaging.[6] These packagings have been permitted only for use at the Packing Group II and III levels, preventing their use for the hazardous materials posing the greatest risk (*i.e.,* Packing Group I). Further, minimum thickness requirements for plastic packagings must still be followed in accordance with 49 CFR 173.28(b)(4). Compatibility requirements for plastic packagings in 49 CFR 173.24(e) are still applicable, ensuring appropriate compatibility with the lading and safe rates of packaging permeation. As such, only plastic resins that have been prepared and evaluated under a manufacturer's quality assurance program may be used in the manufacture of recycled plastic packagings.

In the approvals, PHMSA has required that all recycled material selected for use must be cleaned of residue from the prior lading. Further, batches of not more than 250,000 pounds must be sorted and selected using the manufacturer's quality assurance program. The quality assurance program must identify the sources of the recycled material, their previous lading, and their tested metrics in accordance with designated testing procedures. PHMSA has not been asked and does not anticipate a request for approval to use recycled material that previously contained a Division 6.1 (poisonous) material, material that does not conform to melt index and density test specifications, or material that is otherwise determined to be unsuitable according to the manufacturer's quality assurance program. PHMSA has further required manufacturers to verify that each batch of recycled plastic material has the proper melt flow rate and density, consistent with that of the design type manufactured from recycled material. In addition, PHMSA has required that each batch of recycled resin demonstrate the following characteristics:

1. A melt index (HLMI), when tested in accordance with ASTM D–1238[7] at 21.6 kg and 190 °C, that does not exceed the following ranges:

- An HLMI range of <4 must be within ±1.5 grams per 10 minutes.
- An HLMI range of ≥4 <8 must be within ±2 grams per 10 minutes.
- An HLMI range of >8 ≤12 must be within ±2.5 grams per 10 minutes.

2. A density, when tested in accordance with either ASTM D–1505[8] or D–792,[9] within the range of 0.960 ± 0.02 g/cc.

Lastly, all plastic packagings manufactured from recycled plastic resins under the approvals must be tested more frequently than those plastic packagings manufactured from virgin resins. As an example, the periodic testing of drums must occur at least every 12 months and periodic testing of jerricans must occur at least every 30 days.

In anticipation of interested stakeholders considering the availability of approvals for packaging made from recycled plastics as they develop business plans, PHMSA is seeking input on ways to facilitate innovation and acceptance without compromising safety. Consequently, PHMSA is interested in learning whether any manufacturers have avoided adopting more recent recycling technologies in the use of recycled resins in plastic packaging manufacturing due to approval requirements. PHMSA is soliciting input on this issue to better guide its efforts in promoting increased use of recycled plastic resins in the manufacturing of specification packagings.

IV. Request for Feedback

PHMSA requests comment on the following questions to assist in our evaluation of future approval requests and to better inform PHMSA-supported research and development, and potential regulatory revisions:

1. Are the controls (*e.g.,* material characteristics, design and requalification testing, and manufacturers quality assurance program) in the current approvals adequate for broader adoption of recycled plastics? Are they too narrow or too burdensome? Are there additional controls that should be implemented to ensure safety while using recycled plastic resins?

2. Do current cleaning processes for recycled plastic resins adequately remove all contaminants of the prior lading? What additional cleaning methods are being considered?

3. What, if any, are the potential cost savings in using recycled resins? Has there been or is there an expected increase in demand for hazardous materials packaging containing recycled materials?

4. What would be the climate impact of using more recycled resins?

5. Should hazardous materials packagings composed of recycled plastic resins be limited to resins derived from used hazardous materials packagings (*i.e.,* industrial packagings) or should other sources of plastics—such as plastics from consumer packagings—be allowed? How could PHMSA expand allowable materials sources in this area without adversely affecting the safety of packagings? What consensus standards are available to help facilitate this change in source materials?

6. What research could PHMSA conduct to characterize potential risks of transporting hazardous materials in packagings made of recycled resins?

7. Are there specific hazardous materials classes or divisions, including packing groups, that should not be allowed for use with recycled resins?

8. Are the hazardous materials compatibility requirements of the HMR adequate for use with packagings made from recycled resins or should there be additional considerations? If so, what are these considerations?

9. Should there be a limit to the number of times resins can be recycled, and if so, what should that limit be? How could PHMSA track this information?

PHMSA is also interested in learning whether any manufacturers have avoided adopting more recent recycling technologies in the use of recycled resins in plastic packaging manufacturing due to approval requirements. PHMSA is soliciting input on this issue to better guide its efforts in promoting increased use of recycled plastic resins in the manufacturing of specification packagings.

In conjunction with this notice, PHMSA is considering conducting a webinar to inform the public of its

plastic receptacles, § 178.707(c)(3)(iii) for composite IBCs, and § 178.925(b)(3) for rigid plastic large packagings.

[6] Examples of PHMSA CAA approvals for recycled plastics are available online at:

https://www.phmsa.dot.gov/hazmat/documents/approval/1_CA2012030016_2021125171.pdf/ApprovalsCA_19836_CAApproval-2d7175bc-0a37-413b-a95e-62b3cca6fa77

https://www.phmsa.dot.gov/hazmat/documents/approval/1_CA2011030036_2020094986.pdf/ApprovalsCA_18946_CA-Approval-e329d08c-d80a-4ab3-ade0-82bbc4bd1205

https://www.phmsa.dot.gov/hazmat/documents/approval/1_CA2011030038_2020095047.pdf/ApprovalsCA_18948_CA-Approval-40283db3-31c1-4cc8-bdaa-11309d6922f1.

[7] ASTM D 1238–10: Standard Test Method for Flow Rates of Thermoplastics for Extrusion Plastometer.

[8] ASTM D 1505–18: Standard Test Method for Density of Plastics by the Density-Gradient Technique.

[9] ASTM D 792–20: Standard Test Methods for Density and Specific Gravity (Relative Density) of Plastics by Displacement.

recycled plastics policy if there is sufficient feedback from this notice. Information regarding any future webinars will be made available on PHMSA's website at *phmsa.dot.gov.*

Issued in Washington, DC, on April 10, 2023.

William S. Schoonover,

Associate Administrator for Hazardous Materials Safety, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration.

[FR Doc. 2023–07869 Filed 4–13–23; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–60–P

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Veterans' Advisory Committee on Education, Notice of Meeting

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) gives notice under the Federal Advisory Committee Act, 5 U.S.C. 10, that the Veterans' Advisory Committee on Education (''Committee'') will meet on June 5–June 7, 2023 at 1800 G Street NW, Conference Room 542, Washington, DC. The meeting sessions will begin and end as follows:

Dates	Times
June 5, 2023	1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST).
June 6, 2023	10 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST.
June 7, 2023	10 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST.

All sessions are open to the public.

The purpose of the Committee is to advise the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on the administration of education and training programs for Veterans, Servicepersons, Reservists and Dependents of Veterans including programs under Chapters 30, 32, 33, 35 and 36 of title 38, and Chapter 1606 of title 10, U.S.C.

During the meeting sessions, the Committee will hear reports from three subcommittees (Modernization, Veteran Vocational Education and Training Programs, and Distance Learning) and receive other updates and briefings that they will use for potential 2023 recommendations.

Interested persons may attend in person at 1800 G St. NW, Washington, DC or virtually via Microsoft Teams. Please email *EDUSTAENG.VBAVACO@va.gov* prior to June 2, 2023 if you wish to attend or you can dial-in by phone (for audio only) at 1–872–701–0185 (Toll-Free) using the Conference ID: 902 118 813#.

Time will be allotted for receiving oral presentations from the public and individuals wishing to share information with the Committee may submit written statements for the Committee's review to Mr. Joseph Maltby, Designated Federal Official, Department of Veterans Affairs, by email at *EDUSTAENG.VBAVACO@va.gov*. Advance comments will be accepted until close of business on Friday, June 2, 2023. In the communication, the writers must identify themselves and state the organization or association they represent for inclusion in the official record.

Dated: April 11, 2023.

Jelessa M. Burney,

Federal Advisory Committee Management Officer.

[FR Doc. 2023–07905 Filed 4–13–23; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8320–01–P

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Veterans Rural Health Advisory Committee, Notice of Meeting

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) gives notice under the Federal Advisory Committee Act, 5 U.S.C. 10, that the Veterans Rural Health Advisory Committee will hold an in-person meeting at the Alaska VA Health Care System, 1201 North Muldoon Road, Anchorage, AK 99504. The meeting dates are scheduled Wednesday, April 26, 2023 through Thursday, April 27, 2023. The meeting sessions will convene each day at 9:00 a.m., Alaska Daylight Time (AKDT) and adjourn each day at 5:00 p.m. (AKDT).

The meeting sessions are open to the public.

The purpose of the Committee is to advise the Secretary of VA on rural health care issues affecting Veterans. The Committee examines programs and policies that impact the delivery of VA rural health care to Veterans and discusses ways to improve and enhance VA access to rural health care services for Veterans.

The agenda will include updates from Department leadership; the Acting Executive Director, VA Office of Rural Health; and the Committee Chair; as well as presentations by subject-matter experts on general rural health care access.

Anyone interested in joining the meeting virtually can do so via Zoom, click the link (*https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86520849393),* Meeting ID (*i.e.,* 865 2084 9393), and phone number (1–646–558–8656) will be provided for the individuals who cannot attend in person.

Public comments will be received at 4:30 p.m. (AKDT) on April 27, 2023. Interested persons should contact Ms. Judy Bowie, via email at *VRHAC@va.gov,* or mail at 810 Vermont Avenue NW (12POP7), Washington, DC 20420. Individuals wishing to speak are invited to submit a 1–2-page summary of their comment for inclusion in the official meeting record. Any member of the public seeking additional information should contact Ms. Bowie at the phone number or email address noted above.

Dated: April 11, 2023.

Jelessa M. Burney,

Federal Advisory Committee Management Officer.

[FR Doc. 2023–07926 Filed 4–13–23; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8320–01–P