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WITH US YOU CAN DEPEND ON (SINCE 1957)

- Safety
- Stability
- Reliability
- Consistency

**AIRPLANE DISASTERS, PACKAGING AND CONTEXT**

If you see a news report of a fiery plane crash with graphic video, how does that make you *feel* about flying? If you have a trip, including a flight, coming up does it make you feel a little uneasy? Sure it does...

Do you feel good after buying a lottery ticket? It could be the winner! That does makes you *feel* good...

If you set aside how we all feel about these things and do the math, the truth about both situations is pretty straightforward. Your chances of getting hit by lightning and getting bit by a shark are greater than hitting a big lottery . Sorry.

And when you understand that flying is statistically safer than driving a car or crossing the

street, you feel a lot better about getting on that plane.

In both cases we just set aside how we feel, and using data, put the scenarios into rational context. Another way to say this is; we set aside our beliefs to get at the truths of the situations. At that point anyone can make a good and logical decision that will stand the test of time.

Protecting our environment raises the same issues and if we're all going to do what we can (and we all should) to leave this earth in better shape than we found it, we must understand the truths of "green" behavior and set aside false beliefs. Otherwise we may take actions which make us feel good and actually harm the environment.

Foam Fabricators has been in business since 1957 and even in this current economy is still fairing pretty well. We've been around as long as we have and are still prospering for several reasons, but a couple of the main ones are: we do right by our customers and they can trust us.

When it comes to making environmentally responsible claims, credibility is a big deal. We cannot and will not compromise decades of credibility for a short term gain. We also have lots of children and grandchildren to think of.

To these ends, when citing environmental studies we like to use independent firms and academia, not "industry".

TRUTHS, BELIEFS AND "GREEN" BEHAVIORS

A firm in England (INCPEN) who has been studying and publishing data about environmental issues and plastics (among other things) since 1972 is very helpful when trying to get at the truth of; what is "green" behavior, are plastics and plastic packaging really harmful and how can we ensure a clean, or

cleaner, environment for future generations.

They do not try to convince people or persuade them based on well crafted language or anecdotal examples. They study the data and report the facts. That's all.

Fortunately for them and all of

us, a lot of carbon footprint analysis and similar studies from diverse sources are now available. Patterns are beginning to emerge which are of great value in analyzing the data to get at the truth of what is "green", what's not and how to make environmentally responsible choices.

**EXPANDED PLASTICS DESIGN,
TESTING AND MANUFACTURING**

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One good way to quantify environmental impact is by adding up all the energy used to produce and/or operate something. If you add up all the energy (oil, gas, electricity, etc...) used to produce and operate many common items in your home, here's what it looks like:

- 1) Production of all household goods = 34%
- 2) Water and heat = 24%
- 3) Transpt. (autos) = 15%
- 4) Food production = 8%
- 5) Household appliance use = 6%
- 6) Storing and cooking food = 5%

7) Education and leisure = 4%

Now we're up to 96% of your (an average home) environmental impact. Guess what number 8 is? It's the primary and secondary packaging for all the goods and all food in your home, at... 3%.

Does this mean packaging should just get a "free pass"? No. But what all this does accomplish is putting the environmental impact of packaging in context. Once that is done, you can modify your behaviors to actually lessen your environmental impact, not just feel like you are.

Here are a couple examples of what we're talking about:

- If you turn your home thermostat down 2 degrees or drove 1.25 miles less per day, you would save all the energy needed to make all the packaging for all the food and household items in your home for an entire year.
- If you drive an SUV or light truck and you trade it in on a more efficient car, you will save the same energy you would if you added up all the energy saved by 400 years of bottle recycling, from one household.

One might conclude from all that that making packaging efficient, recycling and source reduction aren't important. But that's the wrong conclusion. Our customers want and need efficient packaging and lean designs. Source reduction (using less material in the first place) is very important and rational recycling is a good thing.

All of these actions help preserve natural resources and improve sustainability – how could anyone argue against them?

So what is the bottom line? If a product got to you undamaged, while it did consume some natural resources and energy, it also did its job. Until we figure out how to make packaging from nothing, all packaging will have some impact on our environment. The question is; does the service it provides offset its total cost and/or impact?

To answer that question, one must understand his or her total average impact on our earth, then put the impact of packaging in context.

So the next time you hear someone talking about banning plastic packaging to help save the environment, ask them if they're working on the other 96% of their impact on our earth too.

It's up to us all to do our part... hopefully logically and in context.

All of the studies and facts cited in this newsletter can be at www.reuseps.com

