



To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing on behalf of Brock International LLC, based in Boulder Colorado with an administrative office in Huntington Beach and a permanent sales force throughout California. We are a manufacturer of eco-effective materials for various applications, including safety base systems for athletic fields and children's playgrounds. Our company is an approved educational provider of the American Society of Landscape Architects and an Educational Sponsor of the Sports Legacy Institute. Our products carry a Cradle to Cradle Silver certificate, the only products in our industry with this level of environmental certification.

With California being one of our primary markets, we would like to comment on one of the aspects of the Fall 2013 update of California 75% initiative. Let us begin by saying that as a leader in our industry for eco-effective solutions we commend any effort to reduce the amount of material that ends up in landfills or incinerators. However in order to achieve this goal in the long term it is important to differentiate materials and products that are recycled or recyclable versus those that are actually downcycled into products of inferior quality.

Recycling represents the re-use of a product or material of equal quality to the original product or material. With the correct design and use of eco-effective raw materials, a product can be recycled in perpetuity with minimal use of resources and damage to the natural environment. Downcycling is instead a pit stop, if you will, on a material's journey to its final landfill destination. This process reduces the quality of a material either immediately or over time to the point where it is no longer useful and can only be practically landfilled or incinerated. Promoting state procurement of post-consumer recycled content products will in many if not most cases result of the use of low-quality products and simply delay the eventuality that these materials end up in a landfill or incinerator. Often times these downcycled materials or products are imported, meaning that California becomes the dumping ground for imported post-consumer or post-industrial waste.

Waste is the result of a design failure. To truly solve for a product's end of life, we have to make it part of the design problem from the beginning. Products should be designed with their next use in mind, thereby leaving a positive mark on the world. Designers have to think about how the product can be reused and its materials recovered as 'food' for new products. By contrast, downcycling is the eventuality of a design failure which converts waste or useless materials into products of lesser quality and reduced functionality. Downcycling aims to prevent waste, but actually only postpones the point at which a product or material becomes un-usable, useless and therefore waste. Almost all downcycled products transform the quality of a material that is so poor in physical properties that any further attempt to downcycle it will prove to be far more costly than to simply produce a new product. With downcycling we are therefore passing on our design failures and waste.

We chose the Cradle to Cradle approach because it strives for eco-effectiveness – doing more good instead of reducing and eliminating with the goal of being less bad. Cradle to Cradle co-founder Dr. Michael Braungart points out that mankind strives to make a positive impact both economically and socially, but when it comes to the environment, we strive for “zero”—net zero, zero waste, etc.—and zero is not a terribly inspiring goal. The Cradle to Cradle approach suggests that, when it comes to the making of things, mankind can go well beyond zero to have a positive, restorative, beneficial impact on the environment.



The Cradle to Cradle design ideal is a world that is not resource constrained, where the concept of waste does not exist, where resources can be reused infinitely, and consumption is sustainable. All materials will be safe and healthy because they have been designed knowing the metabolism they will feed, with safe and healthy ingredients. For products made from technical nutrients, companies must design components of their products as biological or technical nutrients, and for each nutrient, define the path to reutilization, and develop systems to recover used products safely and continuously. Within this framework there will be virtually no need for a landfill.

Cradle to Cradle Certified means there has been external verification of a product's recyclability and safety for human and environmental health. An expert assessment of toxicity hazards of all product ingredients has been made throughout the supply chain down to 100 ppm (0.01 percent). A continuous improvement path has been defined for optimizing product design and manufacturing processes. For those who select Cradle to Cradle Certified products, there is also the sense of joining a growing community of specifiers and consumers who demand truly sustainable products and the transparent, holistic assessment of those products.

As an example of progress, LEED 2009 credits were based on single attributes of materials, such as recycled content. This approach only tells part of the story; a product could have higher than average points attributed based on this one aspect, but far lower than average performance on others. The new LEED v4 approach incorporates the Cradle to Cradle concept and paints a more complete picture of materials and products, enabling project teams to make more informed decisions that will have greater overall benefit for the environment, human health, and communities.

We would like to see California pioneer the initiative that materials procured for state products are designed as technical nutrients and not downcycled products eventually destined for the landfill. To do otherwise is to pass the buck onto future generations. Instead of managing waste, embrace a Cradle to Cradle framework to go beyond minimizing negative impacts, optimize positive impacts, and work towards the goal of 100% good for people and planet.

We hope that you will consider this proposal and we welcome any questions or comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steven Sawyer".

Steven Sawyer
Vice President
Brock International LLC

