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September 2008

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CMRA Details Progress in C&D Recycling

The Construction Materials Recycling Association is the only association that focuses on promoting the recycling of construction and demolition materials, and championing the viewpoints of those who do the recycling. Its members are those companies that recycle concrete, asphalt, wood, metals, drywall, cardboard, plastics, carpeting and asphalt shingles from the C&D materials stream. For more than 13 years the CMRA has performed many tasks to serve the industry, and now it has an affiliated organization, the CMRA Issues & Education Fund, which was set up to do advocacy to regulators and legislatures throughout the country.

The CMRA has set up webpages to support the recycling of concrete, drywall, and asphalt shingles. It is the only association that has broken through many of the barriers to increased C&D recycling. To describe all the success and work the CMRA and the CMRA Issues & Education Fund has done in those 13 years would be impossible, but below are some of the highlights from the past three years:

- Developed a document answering questions about pH runoff from projects using recycled concrete;
- Worked with USGBC to help get alternative daily cover qualified for LEED recycling credits;
- Filed lawsuit against New Hampshire legislation that bans the use of C&D wood as a fuel product;
- Forming Northwest Chapter of CMRA, which illustrates how the association is growing. The chapters in Southern California and New England are still thriving;
- Supported HB 4622 in Illinois, which would consider recycled C&D wood used as fuel as being recycled;
- Provided conduit to NJ DEP for recyclers to work with agency to bring back recycled concrete market;
- Developed www.concreterecycling.org, a website devoted to bringing all the information available on the possibilities of recycled concrete. This will provide information needed to help convince buyers of the validity of the material;
- Fought legislation in Minnesota designed to kill off ADC market;

- Developed and ran in cooperation with the US EPA our Third Asphalt Shingle Recycling Forum in November 2007. Another one is planned for 2009;
- Developed www.drywallrecycling.org, the first website to fully explain the gypsum wallboard recycling process. In addition, the CMRA is planning a drywall recycling forum in 2009;
- Provided peer review comments of EPA document on deconstruction and recycling;
- Met in Washington with EPA on developing accurate numbers of C&D generation and recycling rates in US
- Worked with Michigan DEQ on environmental questions regarding asphalt shingle recycling. Result was development of fair and reasonable regulations for the recycling of tear-off shingles;
- Responded to Connecticut Public Utilities Commission on whether to issue credits for the use of C&D wood as a fuel product;
- Participated in the new Green Highways Program to promote the use of recycled aggregates in the highway market;
- Provided peer review comments on an EPA document on handling disaster debris in order to promote more recycling of the material, when possible;
- Responded to request for Green Energies Study on Green Schools study;
- Responded to proposed C&D regulations in Seattle that would negatively affect C&D recyclers;
- Responded to NYC Mayor's office on recycling's impact on jobs and economy;
- Performed study on pH runoff on sites using recycled concrete after questions arose from DOT;
- Partnered with other industrial recycling association under the Industrial Resources Council to provide information on concrete and asphalt shingle recycling;
- Responded to a situation in New Jersey where the market for recycled aggregates was compromised by misperceptions on the material;
- The CMRA Issues & Education Advocacy fund had its first piece of legislation passed supporting concrete recycling passed in California, SB 420. It continues to work in several states to advocate the viewpoint of C&D recyclers at all levels of government. This remains a core action of the CMRA;
- Commented on and are working with the U.S. EPA to help the agency provide realistic numbers on the amount of C&D generated and recycled in North America;
- Still working with the Massachusetts DEP to help solve a market stalemate over the use of C&D fines generated at mixed C&D plants;
- Members of the CMRA board and staff met with the top levels of EPA's Office of Solid Waste to discuss issues facing C&D recyclers, and now they are interested in helping us solve those problems;
- Re-built the main CMRA website, www.cdrecycling.org;
- Received a large grant from EPA to overcome the barriers to the recycling of post-consumer asphalt shingles. Part of that funding was to upgrade www.shinglerecycling.org to where it is now, the premier site for information about the recycling of asphalt shingles;
- Pushed hard to get a final report on the safety of recycling concrete with lead-based paint on it from the Army Corps of Engineers. The study is very positive about the process;

- Developed Best Management Practices for the use of Alternative Daily Cover made from C&D, and are actively advocating to promote the truth about the material;
- Secured a commitment from the U.S. EPA to relax its proposed rule on leadbased paint. As initially promulgated the regulation would have negatively impacted the industry;
- Currently working with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to identify barriers to increased recycled concrete usage in highway projects. This includes understanding state Department of Transportation (DOT) objections and obstacles;
- Organized a national letter-writing campaign to support SB 1106, which removes the federal exemption some rail-based waste transfer facilities are using to avoid state and local environmental and zoning laws, giving them an unfair advantage in the marketplace;
- Work directly with regulators and legislators, including testifying at appropriate hearings, to educate them on the real world of C&D Recycling;
- Remain members of the Green Highway Initiative, U.S Green Building Council (LEED), U.S. EPA's Greenscapes program, and the Industrial Resources Council in order to promote recycled products in that environment;
- Worked with US EPA to develop figures on the amount of C&D recycled, especially concrete. Our estimates show that at 140 million tons, concrete is the most recycled material in the U.S.;
- Worked with EPA regarding questions on mercury in wallboard made with flue gas desulphurization. What happens to the mercury when it is released in the air by such actions as demolition and recycling?;
- Provided connections for members looking for answers to their state and local problems;
- Promoted the C&D recycling industry at such diverse events as ConExpo-Con/Agg, Brownfields, National Demolition Association, WasteCon, Building Materials Reuse Association, and WasteExpo, among others;
- The CMRA Issues & Education Fund, responded to the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services' proposal to ban the use of C&D fines from being used as ADC in MSW landfills;
- Developed the CMRA awards program to honor the best C&D recyclers and government recycling programs;
- Continue to run C&D World, the only trade show devoted exclusively the recycling of C&D materials. The next C&D World will March 22-24, 2009, at the Tampa Convention Center.

For more information about the CMRA, contact the CMRA at 630-585-7530 or info@cdrecycling.org.