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Searle calls for national flexibility over waste targets

Gordon Carson, packagingnews.co.uk, 10 April 2008

Packaging Federation chief Dick Searle has called for flexibility in the way individual countries implement household waste recycling targets approved by members of the European Parliament (MEPs).

In a debate on Tuesday (8 April) on the Waste Framework Directive, MEPs approved targets for local authorities to recycle 50% of household waste, and 70% of construction and demolition waste, by 2020.

However, Searle said he backed the UK government's view that the figures should be dictated by national circumstances.

The targets were pushed by Conservative MEP Caroline Jackson, the rapporteur responsible for leading the directive through the European Parliament.

She said targets at EU level would act as a "considerable incentive to countries whose recycling schemes are slow to develop".

Searle also said he was pleased to see MEPs vote for energy from waste plants to qualify as 'recovery' rather than 'disposal' operations if they meet new energy efficiency criteria set out in the directive.

Designation as a recovery operation means these plants could burn imported waste and supply power to communities.

"MEPs had been fairly strident in wanting to have a formula that would exclude most of what is currently classed as recovery," said Searle.

He said Jackson had been "very switched on" to the need for countries to become more self-sufficient in their energy production to secure supply.

Jackson will now start talks with the European Commission and Council of Ministers to secure an agreement for the directive at its second plenary reading, scheduled for June.

More on the directive from www.europarl.europa.eu/comparl/envi/default_en.htm



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