Protecting Our Environment

BP-Sponsored Recycling Programs Convert Key Spill Cleanup Material To Auto Parts And Energy

(NAPSA)—The recent completion of recycling programs has proven the viability of converting some of the key equipment used in the Deepwater Horizon oil spill cleanup into some unique and beneficial new uses.

About 10,000 new American cars made this year contain plastic parts made partially from recycled "sorbent boom" that was deployed in the Gulf of Mexico. Meanwhile, much of the so-called "hard boom" used in the cleanup has been converted to electricity at several power plants.

"There are new cars cruising the highway today with recycled sorbent boom under the hood, and the hard boom that has been converted to energy was sufficient to power more than 400 average-sized homes for 20 days," said Dave Rainey, vice president for Science, Technology, Environment and Regulatory Affairs for BP's Gulf Coast Restoration Organization. "As it appears now, more cars produced next year will also contain recycled boom materials, and we have sufficient recyclable hard boom available to generate as much if not more electricity."

In all, BP provided 340 miles of sorbent boom for auto parts and is on tap to provide more than 1,000 miles' worth of hard boom for recycling, including for use in the waste-to-energy program.

"Our mandate was to minimize as much as possible the amount of solid waste material from the Gulf cleanup that was sent to landfills," Rainey said. "We are not only accomplishing that task but we're doing so in a manner that is good for the environment and beneficial to American consumers."

Your next car could contain materials recycled from a surprising source.

Sorbent boom, which is often referred to as "soft" or "sausage" boom, is made from polypropylene, a plastic polymer used in everything from ropes and carpeting to thermal underwear. The product is designed to float on water and soak up oil. Hard boom, which is also called "containment boom," is made from polyethylene foam flotations, vinyl-coated polyester skirt, metal chains and connectors and is deployed to contain spilled oil on water, which is then removed using skimmers and other devices.

"We are very pleased that these concepts proved to be not only technologically viable, but also viable from an environmental and economic point of view," Rainey said.

This recycling effort stems from BP's agreement with the United States Coast Guard, in its incident response plan, to reuse and recycle materials from the Deepwater Horizon cleanup. BP continues to seek additional opportunities for the reuse or recycling of materials where feasible and when those opportunities fit within the regulatory framework of the Gulf Coast states.