Film & Flexibles Coalition

IMPACT IN PROGRESS

Improving Quality of Material and Bales

Valemi, Pico Rivera, California: Case Study



Receiving material from haulers and retailers such as Walmart and Ross Dress for Less, Valemi, a hybrid secondary sort business in Los Angeles County, recognized the rich film and flexibles stream they were sorting and sought out support from The Recycling Partnership to increase the capture of this material.

A new secondary sort line at the facility, installed with support from The Partnership's Film & Flexibles Recycling Coalition, will make it possible to recover more film and flexible plastic packaging. The line will also help Valemi improve the quality of the stream and the bales it produces, without slowing down the sorting of other materials.

The project is an important proof point in southern California for how further sortation of this material type from a variety of sources—curbside single-stream, multifamily and commercial single stream, MRF residue from curbside processing, and dedicated film extraction from MRFs and retail locations—can yield a significant amount of film and flexible material and increase the quality of what is then available for use in new products.

Projects like Valemi demonstrate the role of secondary sortation while supporting end markets. Valemi themselves use some of this material to make trash bags, with multiple outlets for the remainder of the material.



We train our employees to understand every type of plastic that's in the market," said Juan Hernandez, Valemi's president. "That allows us to take products that are technically not even C-grade trash and still bring them back into the market."

With California having active state recycling policies, including the Extended Producer Responsibility law (SB 54) and, more recently, the single-use carryout bag ban (SB 1053) signed in September 2024, the state's recycling industry needs collaboration and focus more than ever.

Valemi has also received grants from The Partnership's PET Recycling Coalition and from its Polypropylene Recycling Coalition. The company is building more capacity to further sort and capture these materials into dedicated and cleaner bales.

"This conversation will have a lot more updates in the next six to eight months," Hernandez said. "We're going to have to do a little bit more work to achieve the outcome we all want here, but we're moving in the right direction."