

Nestle Waters to boost recycling

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08/21/2009

Greenwich-based Nestle Waters North America wants to encourage nationwide recycling of plastic bottles through the recent launch of its Re-source recycling program.

"This is our first major effort to wake up consumers and get them recycling," said Andrius Dapkus, director of innovation and renovation at Nestle Waters North America.

According to a statement from Nestle Waters North America, Re-source is a new brand of bottled water, which is packaged in bottles that are made of 25-percent recycled plastic and is being launched exclusively at Whole Foods Market stores.

The program, carried out in partnership with Waste Management, allows consumers to recycle plastic containers at Re-source-branded GreenOps tracking stations at participating Whole Foods stores. Nestle Waters North America will donate 5 cents to the national nonprofit group Keep America Beautiful for every bottle collected.

The stations, which track individuals' recycling efforts, feature interactive recycling machines with video screens showing how the containers will be recycled into carpet, shopping bags and other products.

"We're hoping to significantly improve recycling rates and close the loop on recycling" Dapkus said.

The program is being launched at 26

stores in California and Arizona with the goal of reaching 200 Whole Foods stores nationwide by this fall.

In April, As You Sow, a San Francisco-based advocacy organization, gave Nestle Waters North America a grade of C- in its annual beverage container recycling report for backing nationwide container-deposit legislation and suggesting an industry-wide goal of 60-percent recycling of polyethylene terephthalate bottles by 2018. Nestle Waters North America also lessened the PET in its Eco-Shape bottles to 12.4 grams with the goal of further reducing it to 9.8 grams.

Nestle Waters' efforts to boost recycling nationwide through its Re-source program is encouraging, because it will be offered in states without a bottle-deposit program, said Conrad MacKerron, director of As You Sow's corporate responsibility program. "This is the first time these residents will have a financial incentive to recycle," he said.

As You Sow has mixed feelings about the Re-source bottle, however, because it uses more plastic than Nestle Waters' thinner Eco bottles, MacKerron said.

"I think it would be better to increase the percentage of recycled plastic in the thinner bottles," he said. "That way, it's a win-win."

Nestle Waters North America's Re-

source program is a perfect fit for Whole

Foods because its customers expect the Austin-based chain of 276 stores nationwide to be at the forefront of the

green movement, said Whole Foods spokeswoman Libba Letton.

"When a program like this comes along, we can't turn it down," she said.