

## CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS RECYCLING

**NSSGA POSITION:** The NSSGA and its member companies support the recycling of many waste materials in construction applications when it is cost effective and will bolster the nation's sagging infrastructure without jeopardizing the future quality of that infrastructure or the environment.

**BACKGROUND:** Millions of tons of asphalt concrete, portland cement concrete and other construction products become available from the repair, demolition, or rehabilitation of highway pavements, parking lots, etc. A significant portion is considered a waste product and placed in landfills. Much of this solid waste has the potential for reuse in Asphalt Concrete (AC) or Portland Cement Concrete (PCC) or in unbound base course applications.



### TALKING POINTS:

- Recycling conserves natural resources and is good for the environment.
- Materials to be recycled must meet current material specifications, be of equal quality to virgin materials and be available on a consistent and reliable basis. The quality of the final product must not be compromised to accommodate recycled materials.
- Recycling presents an effective approach to conserve nonrenewable natural resources and energy and significantly reduces waste disposal problems. While it is technically feasible to recover a wide variety of materials from solid waste in the United States (tires, glass, etc), the material that is recycled should be equal in quality to virgin materials and economically feasible. In addition, environmental controls and constraints should be consistent with those required of conventional aggregate producers.
- When the supply of virgin material is plentiful relative to demand, or virgin materials are more cost effective than recycled materials, or both, the demand for the recyclable material will be low. Legislative mandates are sometimes used to create a demand for recycling, but economics should prevail.
- Approximately 20 percent of the potentially recyclable pavements are actually recycled today. Pavement materials vary widely from site to site, due to the type and quality of the original materials used, aging, degradation caused by traffic loadings, and environmental exposure. As a consequence, the properties of aggregates produced from recycled pavements also vary widely.
- Not all solid waste products are suitable for recycling into AC or PCC. Those that possess the physical, chemical and mechanical properties required of aggregates for construction are acceptable. With equal material properties, the cost effectiveness influences the decision. The cost factors include cost of virgin materials, reusable binder content (if any), transportation, equipment needs, the loss in structural value to the existing pavement section (where pavement surface is milled) and other factors.

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