The January issue prompted some response on PVC.

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I read " **Plastic Battles** " in the January issue, and would like to offer some facts about PVC that may interest your readers.

There are no documented cases of angiosarcoma from vinyl chloride monomer in vinyl workers since the Environmental Protection Agency and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration enacted regulations in 1975. These regulations reduced workplace exposure and led to the reengineering of vinyl production operations in the United States. Today, these are essentially closed-loop production systems. EPA estimates the industry has nearly eliminated vinyl chloride monomer emissions since the 1970s.

According to EPA, vinyl's dioxin emissions constitute less than 0.5% of the total annual emissions. Dioxin emissions in the United States have decreased by more than 90% since 1987. During that time, production and use of vinyl has more than tripled. Interesting to note that the primary contributors of dioxin to the environment include forest fires, commercial and residential trash burning, burning wood in fireplaces, vehicle emissions, and manufacturing other building products not made of vinyl.

About 18 million pounds of post-consumer vinyl are diverted from landfills and recycled into second-generation products each year. In fact, vinyl accounts for less than 0.6% of landfill waste by weight. Post-industrial scrap, trim, and off-spec material recycled from vinyl production adds up to more than 1 billion pounds per year and is also recycled into secondary vinyl products.

As shown in tests by the American Society for Testing of Materials, vinyl is self-extinguishing, does not support combustion, and reduces fire spread. Vinyl is one of the few materials that meet stringent National Fire Protection Association requirements for insulating electrical and data transmission cables, including in plenum applications.

A six-year European Commission study, released in 2004, on the life-cycle assessment of PVC and of principle competing materials stated, "Vinyl is generally better for the environment than alternative materials."

PVC is made from a combination of natural gas, which is a fossil fuel, and 57% salt. This is why it is called polyvinyl chloride, since chlorine is 57% of the base component. Once chlorine is processed into vinyl, it is chemically locked into the product more tightly than it was in salt. Whether it is recycled, put in a landfill, or incinerated, chlorine gas is not released into the atmosphere. Most other plastics are 100% hydrocarbon based.

There are more facts and figures supporting PVC and its use as a building product today and why it should get more serious consideration as a green product. However, environmentalists would rather continue their witch-hunt on a material that has been around for more than 60 years than listen to these facts.

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