



Apparel Care and  
the Environment  
Alternative Technologies and Labeling



# Final Summary and Discussion: Development of an Action Plan

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## Summary

We are now at the final session of the roundtable where we are going to talk about developing an action plan. We have a tremendous opportunity with such a broad spectrum of stakeholders together for the first time, so this final session is a very important part of the roundtable. I'm going to start with a summary of the previous sessions and then I'll set forth the framework for the discussion.

During the first session, the theme was the activities that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has initiated or catalyzed in this area. In particular, we heard about EPA's Design for the Environment (DfE) Program and their partnership for voluntary environmental improvement for the dry cleaning industry. That partnership was formed in 1992. They have made a lot of progress since that time, particularly in exploring the viability of wet cleaning and other alternative processes. Also, they've done extensive outreach concerning wet cleaning and they are working to help eliminate some of the barriers to moving these processes forward. We also heard that the integrated Cleaner Technologies Substitutes Assessment document will be out sometime next year.

From Dr. Riggs and Dr. Grady we heard about an EPA-sponsored research project to evaluate current technology and to identify and screen new technologies. Also, the project will seek to develop a universally accepted procedures to evaluate wet cleaning technologies and will provide input through the American Association of Textile Chemists and Colorists (AATCC) to update care labels.

The subject of the second session was textile care technology developments. We had number of very interesting presentations including some about exciting developments in Europe. Our first speaker was Josef Kurz. He talked about the textile care research in Germany concerning use of water cleaning and organic solvents in carbon dioxide. This research includes efforts to reduce the impact of wet cleaning on textiles and to optimize soil removal. Our next speaker was Manfred Wentz. He gave us a very comprehensive overview of the textile care technology spectra and the care labeling issues. He made three key points: the care labeling instruction should be based on objective rather than subjective criteria; all members of the apparel chain



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should be working together to optimize garment performance as new technologies emerge; and national and international organizations also need to work together. All of these themes were echoed by other participants.

Kaspar Hasenclever talked about professional wet cleaning in Europe. They have found that it provides better cleaning and smell, clearer colors, lower cost, enhanced service capabilities, and full customer satisfaction. Mr. Hasenclever also mentioned that a number of dry cleaners have had increases in their business since adding wet cleaning services to their portfolio. Another benefit of wet cleaning is that it might help catalyze the shift of some of the 90 percent of garments that are currently cleaned in a home to the dry cleaning industry, at least in Europe.

Our next speaker, Walther den Otter talked about the European Wet Cleaning Committee that was established in 1995. He spoke about their Round Robin Trial of two wet cleaning processes and another round robin that is planned for later this year. He stressed that the committee wants to cooperate with the North American institutions in getting an international test method and labeling system established as soon as possible.

Helmut Kruessmann talked about the status of European care labeling. A number of issues have been resolved and a symbol for wet cleaning has been developed. He stressed that more information is needed about what articles can be damaged by the combination of water, detergent, and mechanical action.

Finally, yesterday we heard from Jo Patton about a 1-year demonstration project sponsored by the Center for Neighborhood Technology. It was a wet cleaning-only operation. One of the important results of that project was that they found the use of wet cleaning does not mean that you are simply shifting the air pollution concerns associated with dry cleaning to water pollution concerns. There was pretty much a clean bill of health there. Jo Patton also pointed out that wet cleaning is complex and more information is needed about what fibers and textiles work with wet cleaning.

The third session was about care labeling. We had a very interesting range of perspectives on that issue beginning with the origins of care labeling and comments from the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and the American Society for Testing and Materials, then working through the textile industry, the apparel industry, the retailers, fabric care specialists, and finally consumers.

Connie Vecellio from the FTC talked about the current care labeling rule and efforts to change that rule, particularly with regard to labeling for wet cleaning. A couple of Federal Register notices have already come out asking for comment and the FTC will publish a notice of proposed rule making soon. Connie encouraged everyone to comment on the notice when it comes out.

Jo Ann Pullen from the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) gave us a "tour" of the ASTM standard for care symbols. There is work to be



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done in harmonizing cleaning symbols with Europe and it sounds like there is the will to make this happen.

Kay Villa from the American Textiles Manufacturing Institute (ATMI) talked about her industry's perspectives on "eco-cleaning" developments. We learned that ATMI supports dual labeling of dry cleaning and "eco-cleaning," if it applies only to items that are normally dry cleaned. She expressed concern about the potential damage claims associated with the use of wet cleaning and stressed the need for more testing. We have heard that theme a lot in the past day and a half. She emphasized particularly that, for her industry, new cleaning methods require a new formulation and this will take time. She also stressed that we need to make sure that we are not solving one environmental problem by creating other problems somewhere up or down the chain.

Carl Priestland talked about the apparel industry's perspective on changes in care labeling. He said the apparel industry has a vested interest in good care labeling and he also stressed that any modification of the care labeling rule requires great care and time for the industry to adjust. He was one of the people that stressed that the U.S. labeling system needs to harmonize with international labeling — that we need one system worldwide.

Jennifer Holderness from the Gap gave us one retailer's perspective. There were a couple of concerns that she noted such as customer confusion regarding care labels and how can we best educate customers.

Our next speaker was Mary Scalco from the International Fabricare Institute. She made a number of very important points. Dry cleaners are on the front lines when there is damage and there is a need to educate dry cleaners about care labeling. She thought the care labeling rule needed to be better enforced and she echoed Manfred Wentz's statement that there needs to be a strengthening of the reasonable basis requirement.

Nancy Cassill gave us some very interesting facts about trends in consumer attitudes and perception related to care labeling. One of the bottom lines was we are going casual in the United States. She encouraged an integrated partnership and particularly recommended that the stakeholders representation in the future be expanded to include converters, importers, and exporters. She noted opportunities in the consumer trends and "eco-cleaning" developments for the fabric care industry. Dr. Cassill particularly recommended listening to consumers and learning from them as a means of maintaining a growing customer base. She also stressed the importance, as did others before her, of educating the consumers about the advantages of wet cleaning especially for casual apparel.

That brings us to this final discussion. First off all, it's striking to me that so much of the important activity that has been mentioned taken place in the past four years or less. It's all very recent and this whole "eco-cleaning" movement has acquired a very strong momentum in a short time. As Manfred Wentz mentioned there has been a paradigm shift and things are moving forward. Another point is, from what I've heard, there appears to be a consensus among the many stakeholders that these developments are good as long



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as the “eco-cleaning” processes are economically viable and acceptable to the consumer. Fabric care is a business and it has to succeed as a business, but as long as some of these environmentally friendly alternatives meet those two criteria everyone agrees this is a good area to move forward on. Also, a number of people have mentioned that it’s a very good thing that broad a spectrum of stakeholders are together. This is the first time that there has been such a broad spectrum working together. As someone recently said “working together will be the solution.” We would like to capitalize on that right now by using this final session to talk about how we might move “eco-cleaning” forward. We have called the session *Development of an Action Plan*. I would like to focus most of the time on an action plan to move things forward and reduce barriers to “eco-cleaning.”

Ohad Jehassi commented that using the phrase “eco-cleaning” to stand for environmentally friendly cleaning alternatives presents some difficulties because “eco-cleaning” used to mean something else a few years ago and eco clean is a registered trademark.

Jan Connery continued, by reiterating that in the final session most of the time will be spent talking about action ideas and then time will be spent talking about the mechanisms to move this forward. This forum has brought stakeholders together and there will be other forums in the future. Perhaps there are other ideas about how stakeholders can continue to work together.

There are a couple of things I would like to note about this session. I would like you to think about this as a brainstorming session. These are preliminary ideas. I hope people will feel free to put their ideas on the table and focus. While we won’t have a time to really fully explore every idea, the point here is to get some ideas on the table so they can be taken forward in other forums. And I would also like everyone to understand that if the idea is put forward that does not commit that person’s organization to following through on it.

We are particularly interested in opportunities and ideas for stakeholders to work together. And we want to be forward looking and action-oriented. Every idea has potential merit and we want to take note of it.



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## Discussion

Robert Loop from Paxar Corporation, suggested that a newsletter be published that would focus both on the testing as well as apparel manufacturers.

Ken Adamson of Langley Parisian Limited, mentioned that a number of projects already exist including the Professional Wet Cleaning Partnership (PWCP) and the North Carolina State University (NCSU) and Texas Woman's University (TWU) joint research project.

Dr. Manfred Wentz of R.R. Street & Co. commented on Jan Connery's use of the abbreviation WC to stand for wet cleaning. He pointed out that in Germany WC stands for water closet, or toilet, so that perhaps it would be best to use a different abbreviation.

Mary Scalco with the International Fabricare Institute (IFI), extended IFI's education services to the conference participants, in particular through the PWCP, part of whose goal is education.

Jerry Tew of the American Association of Textile Chemists and Colorists (AATCC), noted that AATCC publishes a newsletter and a monthly magazine called *Textile Chemist and Colorist* (CH) that is goes all over the world. AATCC recently initiated a monthly update on environmental issues that will be included in CH. AATCC would be happy to include information about wet cleaning in those updates.

Bill Seitz of the Neighborhood Cleaners Association International (NCA-I) said that NCA-I has a monthly bulletin that is disseminated world-wide. He said he would be happy to add participants to that mailing list in order to keep them up-to-date with what NCA-I publishes on wet cleaning and dry cleaning. He added that NCA-I has a school, the New York School of Dry Cleaning with a complete wet cleaning facility including the most modern equipment. Mr. Seitz said he would be happy to give interested parties a tour of this facility to give them a better understanding of what the wet cleaning process is. NCA-I also offers wet cleaning courses to teach the dry cleaning industry.

Jack Weinberg proposed that an updated participants list with names and phone numbers and addressees be mailed out to everybody. Mr. Weinberg remarked that he would like the participants to find a way to continue working together based on specific goals that may take some time to define. There are some very specific common goals that a large portion of all the stakeholders can subscribe to and it may be possible to create the framework limited to those goals for ongoing work. He noted that a version of "eco-cleaning" may be such a common goal. Mr. Weinberg expressed his hope that U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will be involved enough in the next period to help facilitate exploration of specific goals and changes.

Jody Siegel said she receives *Textile Chemist and Colorist* and is always looking for articles relevant to her work with the environment. She proposed that an



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action item be to publish in *Textile Chemist and Colorist* and any other relevant trade and technical publication. She also suggested that there be an effort to have speakers knowledgeable about wet cleaning and other alternatives speak at forums such as the AATCC international conference and dry cleaning trade shows.

Paula Smith of the Indiana Department of Environmental Management proposed that the first item on the action plan be to develop a definition of wet cleaning. She noted that many of the states including Indiana, Ohio, and Illinois have already developed their own definition of wet cleaning.

Ms. Smith also proposed further educating consumers on wet cleaning. A lot of dry cleaners don't want to advertise how much wet cleaning they do because they are afraid people will stop bringing items to their shops.

Dr. Wentz pointed out that the goal of the joint research project at NCSU and TWU is to develop objective data based on the scientific method rather than on the advocacy method. Dr. Wentz responded to Ms. Seigal's proposal about publications by noting that technical publications such as *Textile Chemist and Colorist* are peer reviewed. This assessment is based on objective evaluation rather than advocacy. Having scientific and research papers peer reviewed lends them credibility. The same review process is often involved at professional meetings.

Mr. Adamson proposed that one action item be to assess the resources already available such as ongoing committees to see if they adequately meet the need for creating sustained dialogue. There has to be a careful assessment of the mechanisms that currently exists and how they might be enhanced and preserved to insure that this dialogue continues.

Me. Weinberg said that he doesn't feel there is a clear distinction between objective science and advocacy. Many of the people on the research project's advisory board have very clear economic interests in certain outcomes and other outcomes are less well represented. He suggested that review processes be opened up to a larger number of stakeholders.

Jo Ann Pullen of the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM), pointed out that the United States is different from most other nations with respect to voluntary standards. In other nations, voluntary standards are developed in the private sector. ASTM is made up of producers, users, general interests, and consumers and is a broad forum for developing the standards needed for communication and business. A standard definition for professional wet cleaning that matches AATCC's and is reviewed by ASTM would be an appropriate part of ASTM's work. States are developing their own definitions and should be participating in voluntary standards group to develop a common definition. Ms. Pullen proposed that an action plan goal be that standards are in harmony in Europe, Japan, and North America, so that we are one global voice. She said the way to achieve this is through voluntary standards.



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Kay Villa of the American Textile Manufacturers Institute (ATMI) said that in order for ATMI to move forward with a clear definition of wet cleaning, it would help to have someone from the states coordinate a state position or at least put together some background information on the definitions that exist.

John Michener of Millikon, commented that one way to get information out quickly is by using the World Wide Web. He suggested setting up a web site where a wet cleaning definition could be discussed by a number of participants.

Connie Vecellio of the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), commented that most dry cleaners have not only participate in IFI and NCA-I, but they also have state trade associations with yearly conventions with speakers. She suggested that those conventions would be a great place to have speakers tell dry cleaners about professional wet cleaning.

Ms. Scalco responded that she thinks dry cleaners are well aware of what wet cleaning is. What is new to the dry cleaning industry is machine wet cleaning. IFI, NCA-I, as well as the manufacturers of wet cleaning equipment have been educating dry cleaners about how to use this equipment. What hasn't occurred is that type of outreach and education directed toward the textile and the apparel manufacturers. Although, both AATCC and ASTM have formed wet cleaning committees and are already working on that particular issue.

Ms. Vecellio responded that she had not meant to suggest that dry cleaners don't know about wet cleaning. Ms. Vecellio stressed that what the FTC needs in order to produce a new label for wet cleaning is a definition of what professional wet cleaning is as opposed to washing—a definition for what a professional cleaner can do that someone can't do in their home.

Mr. Seitz commented that almost all conferences held by cleaning industry today have a significant amount of wet cleaning technology being presented to the dry cleaning industry.

Ms. Villa requested that the Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT) and the University of California-Los Angeles Program provide her with literature, background studies, or information that she could disseminate to ATMI's members.

Ohad Jehassi of EPA, noted that EPA would be publishing and distributing the proceeding of the Apparel Care and the Environment conference which would include participants names and addresses. He also asked for comments on the best way to follow up on the momentum of this conference. He also commented that EPA's role next year is somewhat uncertain as to how active they are going to remain with this project.

Ms. Vecellio commented that, for the purposes of the Care Labeling Rule, FTC need to distinguish between things that can be home laundered and things that could be washed in water but by a professional. If a professional has special knowledge, chemicals, or finishing equipment that a consumer



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wouldn't have, that could be part of the description. It does not necessarily have to include a machine. The key is to make a distinction between home laundering and laundering that has to be done by a professional.

Dr. Wentz observed that a consensus process is used whenever a national or international standard is developed. He indicated that AATCC would be integrating proposed definitions being developed in Europe as consensus is pursued in the United States.

Mr. Weinberg expressed concern that the definition might incorporate all kinds of equipment, which would mean that less things are wet cleanable than if a definition required a certain more sophisticated kind of equipment. He observed that the definition of wet cleaning and how it interfaces with equipment may impact what proportion of clothes will be able to get that label.

Mr. Weinberg encouraged all the people involved in the discussion to participate in the consensus process. He also emphasized how important it is for EPA to continue its support of the wet cleaning project. He observed the meeting had initiated a new dialogue on the issues and noted that there appears to be agreement on the need for changes in clothing care practice driven by environmental and other concerns.

Ms. Seitz agreed with Mr. Weinberg that it is important to continue the dialogue initiated at the meeting. He suggested another roundtable with broadened participation in early in 1997.

Ms. Pullen commented that it is good to consider the state definitions, models for definitions in the FTC rule, and AATCC and ASTM's standard definitions, all of which serve as good models. She indicated that AATCC and ASTM have worked closely together on developing consensus definitions and that will continue to do so with definitions for professional wet cleaning.

Patrick Gouveia of Navy Clothing And Textile Research, urged everyone to contact their corporate leaders, Congressional representatives, and state government officials to provide EPA with the funding to continue the project. He shared that the Navy is involved in discussing a uniform testing project with Dr. Riggs at TWU, using the wet cleaning. Dry cleaning is a concern to the Navy, which is the biggest user of dry cleanable items in the Department of Defense. He indicated that he has already petitioned the Secretary of the Navy for funding to help support the effort.

In her closing summary Jan Connery of Eastern Research Group, Inc., observed that there had been a number of very specific suggestions regarding enhancing communication. She noted a strong will expressed to proceed into the future and to stay in touch and to find other venues to continue working together. She also remarked on suggestions about outreach to dry cleaners and ideas around the need to develop the standard definition for wet cleaning. She thanked everyone for their participation, particularly the speakers.



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Mr. Jehassi thanked the speakers for their excellent presentations and the attendees for their thoughtful questions and comments. He said he appreciated the feedback indicating that the forum had been a positive, open, and honest dialogue. He stated that everyone has a role to play in preventing pollution and expressed his hope that the dialogue that had been started will help move toward the mutual goal of both improving the environment and continuing to satisfy customers needs.