

## **iNEMI “Life after EU RoHS” Forum** ***(co-sponsored by IPC)***

About 35 people attended the iNEMI “Life after EU RoHS” Forum which focused on emerging regulations beyond EU RoHS and looked at what additional technology challenges may face the electronics industry. The audience was equally divided between technology and policy experts.

The technical community is still focused on resolving the remaining challenges of EU RoHS. At the same time, a number of new environmental regulations are emerging that may or may not be harmonized with current EU member state regulations. What are these new regulations and what technology challenges are they likely to present? Many have argued that industry came to the EU RoHS/WEEE table too late to meet the requirements in an efficient and low risk manner. Are we doomed to repeat history? What should we be doing to prepare for the myriad of new requirements that are being proposed?

Three objectives were established for the meeting:

- Provide a broad overview of the evolving regulatory environment, including the current status of, and issues relating to, the emerging environmental regulations that the electronics industry is preparing for:
  - EU REACH
  - EU EuP
  - China RoHS
  - Other environmental regulations (e.g., state laws in the United States)
- Share information about industry efforts underway:
  - Policy monitoring
  - Policy advocacy
- Identify gaps that remain to be closed:
  - Policy
  - Technology
  - Identify potential new efforts to close the identified gaps

The first two objectives were addressed in three presentations by well known speakers. J.P. Brisson and Felise Cooper of Allen and Overy gave a global overview of pending legislation and focused on the EU REACH and EuP regulations. Tom Valliere of Design Chain Associates described the current status of China RoHS in great detail. Fern Abrams from IPC discussed toxic substance & waste electronics regulation in the Americas. Bob Pfahl reviewed the proactive approach that iNEMI is taking with the US EPA and other stakeholders to evaluate alternatives to brominated flame retardants in printed wiring boards.

Following these background presentations on emerging regulations and industry approaches, the group addressed the third objective: What new technology or policy gaps remain to be closed to

meet China RoHS and other pending regulations? The conclusions from this discussion were as follows (based on current draft regulations):

1. There are no new major technology challenges from China RoHS.
2. Six substances banned in China RoHS are common with EU RoHS (as well as concentration values).
3. Mandatory government testing is required for China RoHS (no self declarations).
4. Unique marking and packaging requirements are needed for China RoHS.
5. No exemptions for China RoHS – but same effect can be achieved by keeping products out of the catalogue (still requires meeting marking and packaging requirements).
6. Biggest new challenge facing supply chain beyond RoHS is the proliferation of Green Programs from OEMs, many of which are establishing unique requirements to differentiate their products and services. These programs continue to drive the discussion around the needs for greater materials content data.

Presentations from this forum are available at:

[www.inemi.org/cms/newsroom/Presentations/SMTAI\\_2006.html](http://www.inemi.org/cms/newsroom/Presentations/SMTAI_2006.html)