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Political landscape for bioplastics and biobased materials

There continues to be an increased interest in synthesizing renewable chemicals from renewable resources, even with the downturn in the economy, which has slowed down the time it takes to reach commercial reality, but there still continues to be partnerships and business deals in the making. As a result of the early commercialization of renewable chemicals such as 1,2-propylene glycol, 1,3-propanediol, bioethanol, polylactic acid (PLA), polyhydroxyalkanoates (PHA), and more recently, polyethylene terephthalic acid (PET), this has encouraged interest nationally and internationally to further build on these early successes. Investments through partnerships are occurring globally involving a multitude of startup companies and amongst mature chemical companies engaged in building their product portfolios. There is interest in complementing existing product pipelines from incumbent technologies with renewably derived products from renewable sources, providing options for consumers to select sustainable products. Now there are both federal and state policies encouraging the growth in this sector, which once, were only in discussion stages. The presentation will focus on the policies impacting the growth of the sector and will provide the commercial status of building blocks for bioplastics and biobased materials.

Biography

Rina Singh is director of policy in the industrial biotechnology and environmental section of the Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO). She previously served as the business development manager at Ashland Inc. She was appointed by the president and CEO as a member of an innovative 10-member team assembled to develop a new strategic direction for Ashland, identifying investment opportunities for \$1.5 billion resulting from the divestiture of petroleum refining operations. She held general management positions in the technology and business development areas of Ashland, including bioproducts business development manager and platform technology manager. She started her career at The Dow Chemical Co as a senior research chemist in the Engineering Thermoplastics Group. The holder of 24 patents and publications, Singh received a BS, a doctorate in natural products (synthetic organic chemistry) and a post-doctoral degree in polymer science from McGill University.

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