

Plastic recycler keeps material from going to China

By Tom Knudson, Sacramento Bee

The journey begins with a plastic bottle tossed into a California recycling bin.

And it ends, more often than not, in China, where that bottle is turned into a cheap trinket or toy – a long-distance, low-grade form of recycling that contributes to global warming and sows no green jobs in California.

Now a company in Turlock is starting to change that.

With dreams the size of a Central Valley super-farm, Peninsula Plastics Recycling is buying up billions of California plastic bottles and feeding them into a jungle of industrial equipment in hopes of jump-starting a new eco-friendly food packaging industry.

The feedstock for that new industry is a Sierra Nevada snowstorm of plastic flakes made from all those bottles. The flakes are trucked to a sister company near Visalia that shapes them into the crinkly, see-through containers that cradle apples and strawberries, that cushion cookies and cupcakes in supermarkets across the United States.

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