

STRONG RECYCLING PROGRAMS BENEFIT THE ECONOMY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Recycling Creates Jobs and Other Economic Benefits



Recycling is often touted as the right thing to do for the environment, but recycling also fuels the economy and makes use of recovered materials that would otherwise go to waste. This creates jobs, provides manufacturers with feedstock, and generates economic benefits for communities and the states in which they are located. Jobs created include those that support recyclables collection, sorting, transporting, processing, brokering, and exporting, as well as domestic manufacturing of products with recovered materials. Such jobs create tax revenue – an estimated **\$13.2 billion** annually – with a total economic impact of **\$172 billion**. For example, one study estimates that¹:

- » The recycling industry creates an estimated 534,506 jobs across the U.S. including:
 - » **155,632** direct “green” jobs;
 - » **175,587** supplier-related jobs; and
 - » **203,287** induced jobs.
- » Wages associated with these jobs total nearly \$34 billion annually.

In addition, recycling reduces waste disposal costs and can provide revenues that help offset recycling program costs.

CURBSIDE RECYCLING GUIDELINES Your City Here



ACCEPTED ITEMS:

- Milk, juice, broth, soup and other food & beverage cartons (caps on)
- #1 & #2 Plastic bottles & jugs (caps removed)
- Glass bottles & jars
- Aluminum & other metal cans
- File folders, office paper
- Greeting cards, regular & junk mail
- Newspapers, brochures & inserts (in bags, do not tie & bundle)
- Paperboard boxes (corned, pasta, tissue etc.)
- Loose metal (jar lids & steel bottle caps)
- Comingled cardboard (flattened)
- Magazines & catalogs
- Phone books

THESE ITEMS ARE NOT ACCEPTED:

- X Styrofoam
- X Electronic waste (batteries, cell phones, computers, etc.)
- X Hazardous waste (paint, pesticides, cleaners)
- X Used oil or oil containers
- X Window panes, mirrors, ceramics
- X Medical waste (syringes, needles, etc.)
- X Yard waste
- X Food waste
- X Trash

EMPTY ALL CONTAINERS. FLATTEN CARDBOARD BOXES.

Supporting recycling programs boosts local and regional economies. Further, advancements in recycling technology are expected to make recycling more cost-effective over time.

What are the Economic Benefits of Recycling in Your State?

To see the economic benefits of recycling in your state, see ISRI's [website](#), which includes an interactive map, or the 2017 ISRI Economic Impact Study [Executive Summary](#).

¹ John Dunham & Associates for ISRI, “Economic Impact Study: U.S.-Based Scrap Recycling Industry, 2017.”

Recycling Conserves Natural Resources, and Reduces Disposal Costs and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The environmental benefits of recycling are more important to achieve now than ever. In a world facing rising population, resource scarcity and climate change, strong recycling programs enable individuals and communities to help protect the environment for future generations. For example:

- » *Community recycling programs support greenhouse gas reduction and energy conservation initiatives, and help communities achieve their waste reduction and sustainability goals. [STAR \(Sustainability Tools for Assessing and Rating\), a national rating system](#) used by many local governments to track their progress in becoming more sustainable, includes recycling goals and solid waste planning among its sustainability metrics.*
- » *Recycling reduces the need for landfill space. While there is adequate space for landfills in some areas of the country, other areas lack space. Transporting waste to a distant landfill is costly, consumes energy and results in greater greenhouse gas emissions. Further, even where space exists for landfills, siting new landfills is often challenging.*
- » *Manufacturing products using recovered materials reduces the need to mine and harvest natural resources, saves energy and further reduces greenhouse gas emissions.*
(See table below)

Greenhouse Gas Impacts of Recycling vs. Landfilling One Ton of Material²

MATERIAL	MTCO ₂ E REDUCED	GALLONS OF GAS REDUCTION EQUIVALENCY	EQUIVALENCIES
Aluminum Cans	9	1,027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Emissions from driving a passenger car 21,570 miles » CO₂ emissions from burning 9,604 pounds of coal
HDPE Containers	1	100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Emissions from driving a passenger car 2,397 miles » CO₂ emissions from 40.9 home barbeque propane cylinders » CO₂ emissions from 2.3 barrels of oil consumed » Carbon sequestered by 26 seedlings grown for 10 years
PET Containers	1	128	
Mixed Plastic Containers	1	117	
Mixed Paper	4	412	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Emissions from driving a passenger car 9,587 miles » CO₂ emissions from consuming 450 gallons of gasoline
Corrugated Cardboard	3	378	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Carbon sequestered by 2.8 acres of forest in one year » CO₂ emissions from consuming 6.9 barrels of oil » CO₂ emissions from 106 lightbulbs switched to incandescent
Cartons ³	3	362	

² Based on U.S. EPA's WARM model, with landfilling vs. recycling and U.S. EPA's Greenhouse Gas Equivalencies Calculator

The bottom line is that products we buy and the packaging they come in are not without value at end of use – they are resources – many of which can be reused or recycled. By adopting measures that support the development of robust recycling programs, state and local governments strengthen local and regional economies, conserve resources and support environmental protection.

Resources to Help You Maximize the Benefits of Your Recycling Program

Programs have the greatest positive impact when participation is high and contamination of collected material is minimal. Free resources are available to support such goals. They include:

- » Supporting Policy Tools by The Carton Council: www.cartonopportunities.org
- » Information about Pay as You Throw (PAYT): www.payasyouthrow.org
- » Tools to Enhance Participation and Reduce Contamination by The Recycling Partnership:
<http://tools.recyclingpartnership.org/>

Your community might also consider requesting additional assistance, in the form of technical assistance or grants, from [The Recycling Partnership](#).