

RECYCLING

Recycling is an issue that has lost some of its luster over the years. However, it has not lost its importance. Using recyclables conserves energy used for manufacturing and lessens the environmental impacts associated with harvesting raw materials. It also allows us to decrease the amount of trash thrown into landfills. However, recycling is not just an environmental issue. It also has huge economic impacts. In 2002 alone, state agencies reported recycling over 2,338 tons of material, saving the state of Ohio over \$280,000 in disposal fees. The recycling industry also fuels Ohio's economy. Recycling in Ohio is a \$30 billion industry. It gives workers good jobs, employing over 98,000 people throughout the state. It also encourages major capital investments and supports state government through fees.

Recycling's Beginnings in Ohio: House Bill 592

In 1988, the Ohio General Assembly first addressed the issue of recycling in Ohio House Bill 592. This dramatic piece of legislation required that the Director of the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency work with the Solid Waste Management Advisory Council to prepare and adopt a state solid waste management plan. The first plan was adopted in 1995. It later was amended in 2001. This plan contained many goals, including:

- Reducing and/or recycling at least 25 percent of the residential/commercial solid waste, 66 percent of the industrial solid waste, and 50 percent of all solid waste generated statewide by the year 2005, and
- Creating a market development strategy so that recycled materials are consumed and used.

This country must make every effort to stem the rising tide of garbage and industrial waste through a more aggressive use of waste minimization and recycling practices. America as a nation is filling landfills faster than it can establish new ones. The waste problem is not going away, and it can no longer be neglected.—George Bush, 41st President of the United States, Message to Congress, June 23, 1989



We are very close to meeting these goals. In 2002, the Ohio EPA reported a 21.48 percent recycling rate for residential and commercial areas, a 63.69 percent recycling rate for industrial areas, and an overall 44.59 percent recycling rate statewide.

Ohio also has worked hard to create a market development strategy to use recycled materials. In 2002, state agencies, boards, and commissions purchased over \$2 million in recycled materials. This was facilitated through Ohio House Bill 25, enacted in May 1993.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Adopt the National Recycling Coalition's Electronics Recycling Initiative to increase the recovery, reuse, and recycling of obsolete electronic equipment and encourage the design, manufacture, and purchase of environmentally responsible electronic equipment.

Implement "Take Back" or "extended product responsibility" initiatives that encourage industry to be either financially or physically responsible for the end-of-life management of their products and packaging.

Adopt a state procurement policy that encourages the purchase of goods made of recycled materials.

Adopt a state source reduction procurement policy to buy and use products and services that help prevent the generation of waste and improve resource efficiency.

Encourage and assist with the collection and recycling of used motor oil by creating a special fund to help cities and counties establish used oil collection centers. Currently, 17 states have adopted oil recycling legislation to protect the environment and educate communities about why it is important to dispose of used oil properly. Recycling the motor oil from just one oil change protects one million gallons of drinking water—or a year's supply for 50 people. Motor oil doesn't wear out—it just gets dirty. Recycling used motor oil saves a valuable energy resource and conserves energy for future generations. Perhaps most notably, recycling motor oil helps America reduce its dependency on foreign oil imports.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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