



Plastics Recycling:

Two and a Half Decades of Growth & Momentum

Good news for our environment and economy: Plastics recycling in the U.S. has been growing since we began measuring in the early 1990s.

Plastics makers have invested billions of dollars in plastics recycling. In partnership with brand owners, retailers, and recyclers, these investments are producing encouraging results. The volume of plastics recycled has doubled since 2009, and the demand for recycled plastics continues to grow and exceeds supply.¹



Consumer Access

Access to plastics recycling has grown dramatically over the past few decades. Nearly all Americans today have access to a plastics recycling program.

**94%
ACCESS**

to plastic bottle recycling

**90%+
ACCESS**

to plastic wraps/
bags (film) recycling

**60%+
ACCESS**

to other rigid
plastics recycling

Plastic Bottles²

(containers with necks smaller than their bodies)

- More than **3 billion pounds** were collected for recycling in 2014.
- 2014 was the **25th consecutive year** Americans increased the pounds of plastic bottles collected for recycling (measuring began in 1990).
- **Recycling rate reached nearly 32%** in 2014.

Rigid Plastics³

(non-bottle rigid plastics, such as wide-mouth containers, bottle caps, toys, and crates)

Nearly **1.3 billion pounds** of rigid plastics were collected for recycling in 2014, more than

4X the amount collected in just 2007 (when measuring began).

Plastic Wraps and Bags, a.k.a. "Film"⁴

(e.g. wraps from paper towels/bathroom tissue, bags for bread, produce, and shopping)

- Nearly **1.2 billion pounds** of plastic wraps and bags were collected for recycling in 2014, an **increase of 79%** since 2005 (when measuring began).
- **Recycling rate reached 17%** in 2014.
- Plastic wraps and bags are **collected at more than 18,000 storefront locations** across the U.S.

Recycling + Energy Recovery

When we combine plastics recycling with the energy recovery of non-recycled plastics—typically from facilities that convert these plastics into energy, fuels, or chemical feedstocks—27% of all plastics generated were diverted from landfills in 2013.⁵

Environmental Benefits

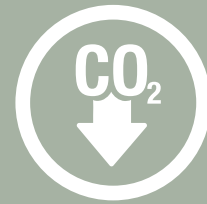
Increased plastics recycling leads to a cleaner environment: less waste, lower energy use, and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.



EPA: Recycling reduces the amount of waste sent to landfills, plus conserves natural resources.⁶



Recycling just two types of plastics (HDPE and PET) can save enough energy each year to power 750,000 homes (2011 figures).⁷



Recycling HDPE plastic can reduce greenhouse gas emissions 66% compared to using virgin HDPE.⁸

Good Jobs

EPA: Recycling helps create new well-paying jobs in the recycling and manufacturing industries in the U.S.⁹ More than 3,700 businesses are involved in recycling plastics.¹⁰



3,700
BUSINESSES

New Products Made with Recycled Plastics

Recycled plastics are used to make a wide variety of innovative products, such as auto parts, carpeting, outdoor furniture, fleece jackets, packaging/bottles/bags/containers, and more, helping keep valuable materials out of landfills.

¹ <http://www.plasticsrecycling.org/news-and-media/437-january-11-2016-plastics-news>

² <http://plastics.americanchemistry.com/bottlesreport>

³ <http://plastics.americanchemistry.com/rigidsreport>

⁴ <http://plastics.americanchemistry.com/filmreport>

⁵ http://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-09/documents/2013_advncng_smm_fs.pdf

⁶ <http://www.epa.gov/recycle/recycling-basics>

⁷ <http://plastics.americanchemistry.com/Education-Resources/Publications/Life-Cycle-Inventory-of-Postconsumer-HDPE-and-PET-Recycled-Resin.pdf>

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ <http://www.epa.gov/recycle/recycling-basics>

¹⁰ http://www.plasticsmarkets.org/jsfcontent/numberofbiz_jsf_1.pdf