

BUILDING COLORADO'S NEW RECYCLING ECONOMY

LET'S STOP THROWING AWAY JOBS AND BURYING MONEY, AND INSTEAD CREATE A VIBRANT, SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY BASED ON A ZERO WASTE ETHIC.

THE RECYCLING CHALLENGE: MILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

Colorado recycles only 12 percent of its waste, much less than the national average of [34 percent](#).¹

This abysmally low recycling rate costs Colorado jobs and money—a lot of jobs and money. In 2014, Colorado landfilled valuable materials worth as much as \$170 million—that's enough money to cover the tuition costs of sending more than 15,000 students to the University of Colorado every year.

This is an ECONOMIC problem as well as an environmental problem. Imagine the potential jobs and revenue that could have been generated had those valuable materials been sold, reused or remanufactured instead of trashed.

Coloradans share strong conservation values, yet our state is [one of the most wasteful in the nation](#).² More than 40% of Coloradans do not recycle regularly, and 25% never recycle. Residential curbside recycling is available in [less than half of counties in Colorado](#).³



HOW MUCH TRASH DOES COLORADO THROW AWAY?

- ▶ Colorado produces [more than 35 million pounds of trash EVERY DAY](#).⁴ That's enough trash to fill one garbage truck every minute of every day for a year.
- ▶ Per capita that works out to be nearly seven pounds of trash per person tossed in landfills EVERY DAY.



THROWING AWAY MONEY

- ▶ Much of what goes in the trash has value and could be sold on the recycling market—this includes materials like aluminum, cardboard, and plastic bottles.
- ▶ Colorado buries recyclables worth an estimated \$145 million to \$170 million in landfills annually.⁵
- ▶ Recycling, reuse, and remanufacturing industries in Colorado generate \$8.7 billion in economic benefits annually, even at our [low recycling rate](#).⁶ (Imagine the benefits if we doubled or quadrupled that rate!)



THROWING AWAY JOBS

- ▶ Nearly 86,000 jobs in Colorado are generated by the recycling, reuse, and remanufacturing industries, even at the current low recycling rate.⁷
- ▶ [Recycling creates nine times more jobs per ton of waste than landfills](#).⁸
- ▶ [Reuse creates as many as 30 times more jobs per ton of waste than landfills](#).⁹

COLORADO LAGS BEHIND OTHER STATES

States around the country are investing in recycling to create jobs and boost their local economies:

- ▼ The State of Michigan is adding one million dollars to its existing recycling funds in order to double its residential recycling rate.
- ▼ While Colorado allocates less than \$0.50 per ton of trash to recycling programs and grants, Ohio, Wisconsin and other states allocate between \$2 and \$7 per ton to recycling.

THE SOLUTION: UNLOCK THE ECONOMIC POWER OF RECYCLING

It's time to get serious about Colorado's New Recycling Economy. The state needs to provide direction, funding and support to help local communities expand recycling programs:

1. Develop a statewide recycling plan of action.
2. Set a statewide recycling goal and timeline to achieve it.
3. Increase funding and technical assistance to local communities to expand recycling services.
4. Support research and development of new recycling technologies, systems and markets for recycling, reuse and remanufacturing industries through public-private partnerships.

TAKE ACTION TODAY!

To learn more and sign the call-to-action letter to Governor Hickenlooper, visit:

www.ecocycle.org/zerowastecolorado



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