

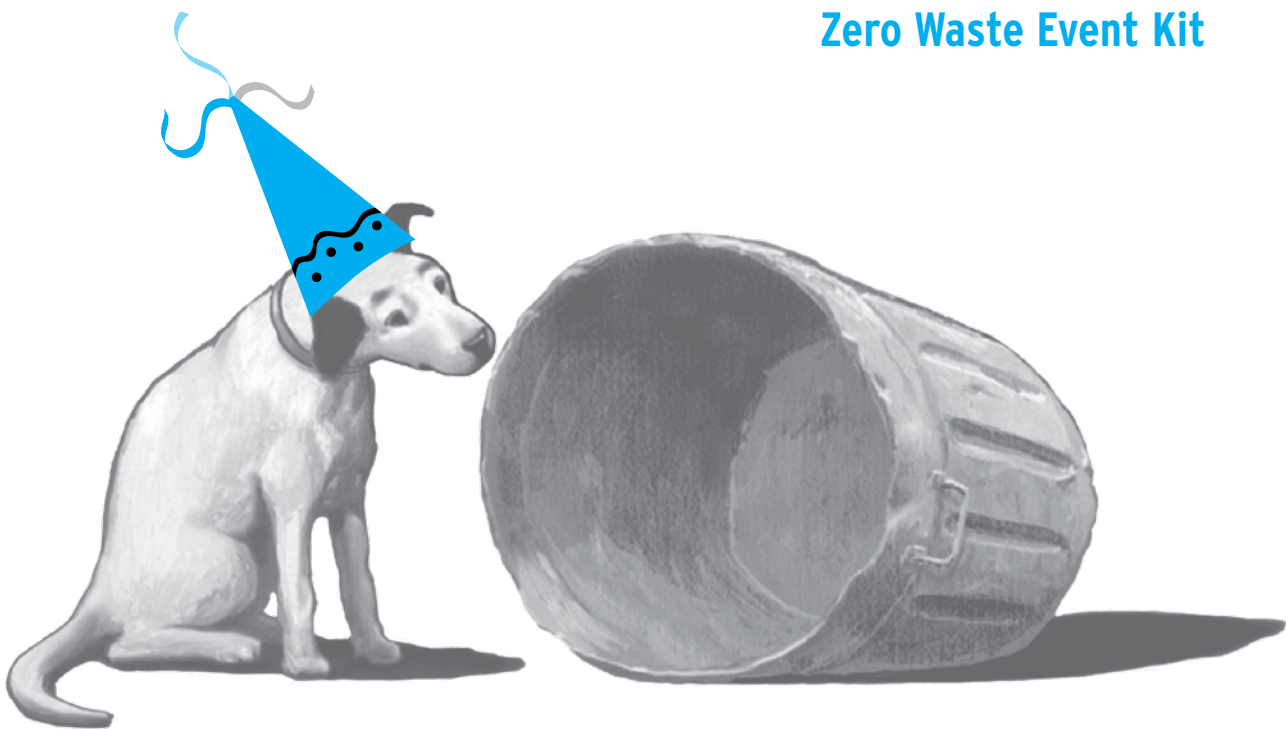
# eco-cycle times

Volume 31, No. 1 | Spring/Summer 2007

Working to Build Zero Waste Communities

## Our newest tool for YOU:

Now you can take Zero Waste home  
with Eco-Cycle's do-it-yourself  
Zero Waste Event Kit



Use the kit for your next birthday party, conference, wedding, meeting, bar mitzvah, baby shower, barbecue—you name it. We'll provide everything you need to make any event Zero Waste.

See story page 1.

## Recycling Guidelines Inside

# Throw a Waste-Free Party with Eco-Cycle's Zero Waste Event Kit

by Erin English

As a Boulder or Broomfield County resident, you've likely entered a "Zero Waste Zone" somewhere in your community. Maybe it was a Zero Waste event where everything sold is reusable, recyclable or compostable; non-renewable petroleum-based plastic disposables are replaced with compostable tableware made from plant starch; and trash cans are replaced with Eco-Cycle Zero Waste stations. Perhaps you're "in the zone" every day at your workplace or at your child's school, partnering with Eco-Cycle to implement Zero Waste practices. These Zero Waste Zones have prompted a common question from our dedicated Zero Waste community members: "How can I make my wedding/baby shower/bat mitzvah/birthday party/conference/meeting/picnic a Zero Waste event? Is there some sort of kit? Now there is!

Eco-Cycle announces our new Zero Waste Event Kit, a do-it-yourself kit to create your own Zero Waste Zone, and throw a waste-free event for anywhere from 25 to 150 guests. Designed for any group gathering you can dream up, the Event Kit contains the following:

### Compostable Tableware

At the core of each kit is a selection of tableware made of compostable plant starch, cornstarch or sugarcane, rather than non-renewable petroleum-based plastics. The amount, size and type of tableware are customized for your needs, depending on the size of your event and the food and/or beverages you plan on serving.



*Eco-Cycle's Zero Waste Event Kit contains everything you need to throw a waste-free celebration for 25 to 150 guests: compostable tableware, a compost collection box and educational signage (not pictured).*

Your kit may include

- Compostable hot & cold liquid cups (cocktail, juice, coffee cups, etc.)
- Compostable plates and bowls
- Compostable spoons, forks and knives
- Paper napkins made of 100% post-consumer recycled content

### Compostables Collection Container

The compostables collection container consists of a sturdy cardboard box lined with a compostable BioBag. All leftover food (including meat, bone and dairy), food-soiled paper and the compostable tableware that comes with your kit go straight into the box at the end of the event.

### Educational Signage

Table signs informing guests that everything at your event can be recycled or composted are included for you to place on buffet and dining tables. We encourage you to use your curbside recycling collection bin to gather commingled containers, and we supply you with a guidelines sign to affix to the side (collapsible recycling bins are also available). Your compostables collection container comes already labeled with clear guidelines.

### Ordering and Using the Kit

The kit is easy to order on our website, and easy to transport in your vehicle. Every single thing in the kit is compostable or recyclable, down to the bag used to hold your compostable utensils. When your event is over, we ask that you do three things:

- 1.) Take your compostables collection container back to the Eco-Cycle/City of Boulder Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials (CHaRM) and empty its contents in our compost bin. From there, your compostables are delivered to a regional composting facility where there are turned into compost, a nutrient-rich soil amendment.
- 2.) Put your recyclables out at the curb, or for larger events generating too many materials for curbside collection, take them with you to the CHaRM or to the recycling drop-off center nearest to you (see page B for locations).
- 3.) Pull those leftover chicken wings and chocolate cake out of the 'fridge and celebrate all over again, knowing your event didn't come at a cost to the environment!



### How can I order a Zero Waste Event Kit?

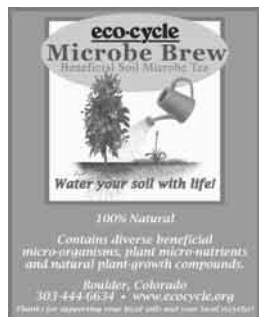
Place your Zero Waste Event Kit order online at [www.ecocycle.org/zwevents](http://www.ecocycle.org/zwevents). The kit costs between \$15-\$20/per 25 guests (depending on the amount of compostable items you need) with a maximum of 150 guests accommodated per event.

Please allow **three full business days** for Eco-Cycle to fulfill your order.

Once you receive an email confirmation, you can pick up your kit at the CHaRM during regular business hours, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Saturday (see map on page D).

# Microbe Brew is Back!

by Erin English



Eco-Cycle's Microbe Brew is back again for a third season, helping plants survive and thrive in the challenging Colorado climate. If you're a gardener in Colorado, you've no doubt struggled with the depleted soils,

weeds and hot, rain-less weather typical of our region. It's a formidable challenge to maintain the beauty of what's green and growing over the long haul, particularly through the hot and often dry summer months. One proven way to ensure your plants stay alive—and thrive—is to apply Eco-Cycle's Microbe Brew, from now through fall.

Microbe Brew is a 100% natural liquid soil amendment full of living microbes and beneficial growth compounds that, when applied to soil or plant leaves, results in hardier, more pest-resis-

tant plants. Applying the brew is simple: Just sprinkle it over your lawn and garden beds using a standard watering can and then water it in until your soil is thoroughly moistened. With regular applications, you'll find you need to water less and your plants will grow taller, fuller and stronger.

### City of Boulder Offers 50% Discount to Residents

For the third year in a row, city of Boulder water customers can cash in on a 50% discount on Microbe Brew, generously offered by the Boulder Water Conservation Office. Because of the brew's ability to hold water in the soil and reduce evaporation, the Water Conservation Office is encouraging its use as a water-saving measure. Just show us a recent Boulder water bill when you purchase the brew to receive your discount. If you are not a Boulder water customer, just clip the coupon on this page!

**To learn more about Microbe Brew, visit [www.ecocycle.org/compost](http://www.ecocycle.org/compost).**

### Where to Purchase Microbe Brew

Microbe Brew is available from April through September at the following locations:

#### Boulder Farmers' Market

(The first ongoing Zero Waste event in the country!)  
13th St. between Arapahoe Ave. and Canyon Blvd.  
Saturdays from 8 a.m. – 2 p.m.

**The Eco-Cycle/City of Boulder Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials (CHaRM)**  
5030 "old" Pearl St., Boulder (see map on page D)  
Wednesdays ONLY from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

#### Prices

\$25/5 gallons (covers all planted areas of a typical city lot)  
\$6/gallon (covers 200-400 square feet)  
\$2.50/quart (covers 50-100 square feet)

**Interested in large quantities?** Contact us for more information at 303-444-6634.

A refundable container deposit of \$.50 (\$5 for 5-gallon containers) will be charged at purchase. ♻️

### COMPOST TEA COUPON

**50% off Eco-Cycle's Microbe Brew**



**Water your soil with life!**

*Please present this coupon when you visit us at the Boulder Farmers' Market or the CHaRM.*

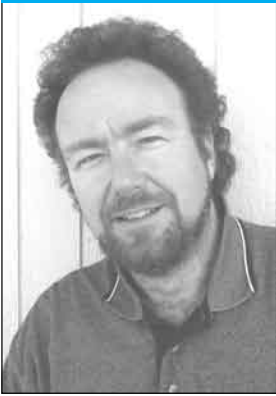
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Eric Lombardi  
Executive Director

# Letter to a Zero Waste Activist

I recently heard from a woman named Donna who is organizing people in Vermont for a Zero Waste (ZW) world. She sounded like a beleaguered activist, overwhelmed by the effort ahead of her. It is a feeling with which I’m well familiar, so I had to respond and share a story of my own with her. All across the globe, there are people like Donna, fighting the good fight to make a better world, so I thought I’d share this story with all you activists out there working with us toward monumental change:

Dear Donna,

Thanks for writing to me about being overwhelmed by both the scale of the problem of environmental destruction and the scope of your hopeful vision. I, too, feel overwhelmed by it all sometimes. Here’s a short story you might relate to.

A couple of years ago, I was in New York City having a retreat with the GrassRoots Recycling Network Board. While there, we did a public forum on ZW with some city groups and NYC Council members. It was all very energizing and hopeful, and I felt inspired by the exciting potential of having one of the most influential cities in the world take action toward ZW.

But late that night around 2 a.m., I was looking out my hotel window and watching the city streets from 20 floors up. I was stunned at what I saw—trash trucks everywhere, zooming up and down the streets, stopping about every 50 feet along the sidewalk to pick up mountains of black plastic bags filled with trash. (That is the collection system in NYC, since they don’t have any alleys.) The scale of waste was unreal—a sea of bagged natural resources heading to the landfill, with no evidence of recycling. My heart sank, and I felt sad and confused. Here I was, preaching, energizing, believing in a ZW future and doing my best to get people to share it with me. Was I just fooling

myself? At that moment, the crisis I was experiencing wasn’t just about the waste problems of the world, it was also a personal panic about what I was doing with my life, so fully committing my career and energy to a vision that seemed so out of reach.

As these feelings came to me, they grew and grew. I sank deeper and deeper into despair, and then I hit the bottom. I sat there, at the bottom, ready to walk away and stop being so idealistic, working on a seemingly insurmountable problem. What would I do next? That wasn’t a worry. I knew I had options. But then I started thinking about what the “waste manufacturing industrial complex” would do if I, or any of the other ZW crusaders, walked away. What would happen if ZW faded away? What would happen to our natural resources, our climate, the millions of species on the planet, our health and the health and quality of life of generations to come?

I then saw the value of my work. I may be have been seen (and still might be) by some as a crazy ZW salesman, but I was also conjuring up hope in people like the NYC council. I was communicating a vision that encouraged people to lift their heads and look forward to a better future, and that was enough to save my ZW soul that night. I knew then, in the deepest way, that being on the path to ZW really was the point. I was on the right side of history, along with thousands of other people out there making ZW happen.

So I go on, educating, sharing hope, and doing a little bit of good with this one life I have. Along the way I get to share time with folks like you. While I realize the ZW vision is world-changing and enormous and will take a lot of people to make it happen, it’s worth it. Increasingly, we are making measurable progress, and I realize we’re so lucky to be part of this important work. My kids and your kids are watching us every day, and that feels great because I know that our work will live on.

P.S. Incidentally, two years later, the city of New York has taken steps toward ZW, and is setting an example for other cities around the world. Who’s crazy now? ♻️

# Tribute to Rosemary McBride



If you’ve lived in Boulder for very long, you’ve no doubt had the pleasure of meeting Rosemary McBride, a devoted advocate for many civic, humanitarian and environmental causes and initiatives in our community. Eco-Cycle met Rosemary back in 1979 when she joined us as one of our founding Block Leaders, volunteers who introduced the concept and guide-

lines of recycling to their neighbors and helped make our community one of the first in the U.S. to implement curbside recycling. Rosemary was instrumental in creating this education model that continues today

and is duplicated in many communities across the nation. She generously shared her time with many other organizations, such as The Dairy Center, The League of Women Voters, and Open Space (to name only a few), and she remained a committed and active Eco-Cycle volunteer up until her death in February of this year. Rosemary could be counted on to show up and speak at council meetings, commissioners’ hearings, public events and celebrations in support of Eco-Cycle’s efforts in resource conservation. On behalf of all the organizations she supported and the community she affected in so many ways, we say thank you, Rosemary. You lived the life of the joyful activist, and we strive to do the same in your name. We will miss you. ♻️

## Got recycling questions? We’ve got answers!

[www.ecocycle.org](http://www.ecocycle.org)

### Tools and Resources

- Detailed guidelines & maps
- Our Reuse Resource: Eco-Cycle Exchange
- Guide to Hard-to-Recycle Materials
- Do-it-yourself Zero Waste Kit

### Subscribe Online

- Eco-Cycle Times
- CHaRM Updates
- Volunteer newsletter
- Business newsletter

### Educate and Activate

- Educational videos
- Enviro-campaign updates
- Sign letters and petitions
- Volunteer and donate

# Accolades for Eco-Cycle's School Programs

Now in its 20<sup>th</sup> year, the Boulder/Broomfield County School Recycling and Environmental Education Program was honored with this year’s Our World Award from the Boulder Rotary Club. Each year, the award is presented to an individual or organization from the Boulder community making a significant contribution to the conservation and preservation of the environment. Eco-Cycle received a trophy and \$1,000 cash prize for its efforts to bring environmental education programs, innovative services and workshops to local schools.

Eco-Cycle’s Green Star Schools Program was also the recipient of this year’s Region 8 environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Environmental Achievement Award. Eco-Cycle is currently working with 14 Green Star Schools in Boulder County to reduce waste, increase recycling, implement composting and expand environmental awareness. The award recognizes significant achievements in the protection of public health or the environment, or in advancing the Agency’s current strategic goals in Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming and sovereign tribal nations. Eco-Cycle received the Environmental Achievement Award last year for its Zero Waste Farmers’ Market in Boulder.

For a complete list of schools participating in the Green Star Schools Program, see page 6. ♻️



Green Star Schools Coordinator Nancy Dudek (left) and Eco-Cycle School Recycling and Environmental Education Program Coordinator Cyndra Dietz (right) accept the Our World Award cash prize and trophy from John Sullivan with the Boulder Rotary Club.

# Eco-Cycle Recognizes Zero Waste Efforts at 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Business Awards

by Anne Mudgett

For the past three years, Eco-Cycle has partnered with hundreds of local businesses to demonstrate that going for Zero Waste is a business model that works—not only for the preservation of our environment but also for the bottom line. Through Eco-Cycle’s Zero Waste Services program, these businesses receive guidance about better purchasing decisions to reduce waste in the first place, trainings to encourage employee involvement and empowerment, and collection services for their recyclables, compostables and “whatever’s left.” With Eco-Cycle, businesses are recycling and composting 70% or more of their discards and demonstrating to other businesses locally and nationally a sustainable alternative to typically wasteful “business as usual” practices.

We are proud of the commitment of these forward-thinking companies. To recognize their exceptional efforts to work toward Zero Waste with Eco-Cycle, we recently gathered 100 of our business and community partners for an awards luncheon at the Boulder Outlook Hotel & Suites. A panel of community judges chose this year’s award winners in three categories for both small (50 employees or fewer) and large (51 employees or more) businesses.

## And the winners are... Going for Zero Waste... or darn near!

*Businesses working with Eco-Cycle to reduce waste before it happens with Zero Waste purchasing choices, and composting and recycling nearly all their discards with Eco-Cycle’s 100% collection services.*

**Small Business.** [Boulder Outlook Hotel & Suites](#) is examining the entire lifecycle of products and packaging and making more environmentally-friendly choices to prevent waste and pollution by purchasing condiments in bulk rather than single servings, choosing all-natural guest shampoos and soaps in recycled and recyclable packaging, and using

non-toxic cleaning products. As Boulder’s first Zero Waste hotel, the Outlook has also made Zero Waste a visible element of each guest’s experience and a key part of their sales and marketing message. A hand-painted recycling bin and a compost collection bag can be found in every guest room, and, according to Dan King, the Outlook’s Managing Owner and Ambassador of Cool (his official title), the hotel’s dedication to Zero Waste is paying off—management can identify \$120,000 in increased revenues over the first 10 months of using Eco-Cycle’s services.

**Large Business.** [Whole Foods Market](#) is composting and recycling 74% of their discards using Eco-Cycle’s Zero Waste Services and involving all 365 Boulder team members to achieve this notable diversion rate. Team members participate in rigorous training and ongoing assessment of their waste reduction efforts, such as waste sorts. Periodically, team members and Eco-Cycle staff roll up their sleeves and sort through composting, recycling and trash in the store parking lot to evaluate progress toward Zero Waste. Whole Foods Market’s sustainability efforts also extend well beyond the walls of the store. For their daily commute to and from work, team members are encouraged to walk, use public transportation, or ride one of the 20 “Green Mission Bikes” provided by the company.

**Outstanding Composting and Recycling Program**  
*Businesses using Eco-Cycle’s collection service for compostables, in addition to traditional recyclables and/or hard-to-recycle materials.*

**Small Business.** [Eco-Products](#) is a

locally-based company selling environmentally-friendly building materials and business supply products, including compostable food serviceware. To minimize waste at their own facility, Eco-Products utilizes the compostable products they sell for company meetings and parties. Eco-Products is also recycling hard-to-recycle materials, such as pallets and stretch wrap. In 2007, Eco-Products also plans to add zero emissions to the company’s already established sustainability practices. A newly-installed solar system will help the company reduce fossil fuel use.

**Large Business.** [The Kitchen](#), a restaurant whose menu promotes the use of local and artisanal products, is composting all of its organic discards with Eco-Cycle and uses 100% compostable to-go containers and cutlery. The Kitchen has also furnished and decorated the restaurant with reused and recycled building materials; tables and bars are made of reclaimed lumber and light fixtures are fashioned from discarded test tubes.

**Outstanding Recycling Program**  
*Businesses using Eco-Cycle’s collection service for traditional recyclables and/or hard-to-recycle materials.*

**Small Business.** [Namaste Solar Electric](#) installs and maintains solar electric systems, helping local residents and businesses become more energy independent. The company’s employee-owners buy food in compostable and recyclable packaging, and they have made a commitment to recycle and compost as many materials as possible, including hard-to-recycle materials, such as stretch wrap, #6 white block foam, big durable #2 plastics and scrap metal.

**Large Business.** In 2006, [Roche Colorado Corporation](#) enhanced its recycling program with a goal to increase traditional recycling. Working with Eco-Cycle staff, Roche Colorado increased the availability of recycling containers and educated employees about the

benefits of recycling, resulting in increases in recycling rates of more than a third. Roche Colorado also won the EPA’s Green Chemistry Award for the company’s efforts to reduce the impact of its pharmaceutical manufacturing through process design and solvent selection that minimize material use and increase recycling opportunities. ♻️

## Congratulations to Eco-Cycle’s Zero Waste Business Awards Nominees and Winners

**Going for Zero Waste... or darn near!**  
**Small Business**  
**Winner:** [Boulder Outlook Hotel & Suites](#)  
Amadeus Consulting  
Boulder Ice Cream  
La Sportiva N.A., Inc.

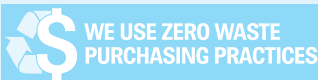
**Large Business**  
**Winner:** [Whole Foods Market](#)  
A Spice of Life Event Centers and Catering Services  
Old Chicago (Boulder)

**Outstanding Composting and Recycling Program**  
**Small Business**  
**Winner:** [Eco-Products](#)  
Berry Best Smoothies  
Boulder Blooms  
Eastern Sun Academy  
Phil’s Fresh Foods

**Large Business**  
**Winner:** [The Kitchen](#)  
WhiteWave Foods Company

**Outstanding Recycling Program**  
**Small Business**  
**Winner:** [Namaste Solar Electric](#)  
HospiceCare & Share Thrift Shop  
Longmont Area Chamber of Commerce  
Shining Mountain Waldorf School  
Traptek, LLC

**Large Business**  
**Winner:** [Roche Colorado Corporation](#)  
Amgen



## A Sign of the Times

Look for these decals at local businesses working toward Zero Waste with Eco-Cycle. Please support their Zero Waste efforts with your patronage. To get your business started on the road to Zero Waste, call 303-444-6634 or visit [www.ecocycle.org/zws](http://www.ecocycle.org/zws).

## Welcome to Our Newest Zero Waste Services Customers

The following Boulder and Broomfield County businesses and organizations are going beyond recycling with Eco-Cycle’s Zero Waste Services program. Please thank them with your patronage for their commitment to the environment and our community!

**Going for Zero Waste**  
Amadeus Consulting Group  
Anjou  
Boulder Valley Church of Christ  
Mock Property Management  
REI #44

**Composting and Recycling**  
8 Islands Hawaiian BBQ  
Cheba Hut  
The Organic Dish  
Unitarian Universalist Church of Boulder  
V.G. Burgers

**Composting**  
First Congregational UCC,  
Longmont  
Gaiaam  
Iron Flats c/o Hast & Company  
Organic Orbit  
Shamane’s Bake Shoppe  
Snow Lion Preschool

## Stop! Don’t throw it away!

Post your usable, unwanted items on  
**Eco-Cycle Exchange**  
at [www.ecocycle.org](http://www.ecocycle.org)

Eco-Cycle Exchange is your free  
online reuse resource.  
*It’s free to post, free to browse and  
free to exchange!*





# Fryers Rejoice: Cooking Oil Recycling Now Flowing Full-Time at the CHaRM!

by Erin English

Way to go, recyclers! Thanks to your high level of participation and strict adherence to guidelines during our six-week pilot program this past holiday season, we are now accepting used cooking oil year-round at the Eco-Cycle/City of Boulder Center



Hi, Meg here at the Eco-Cycle/City of Boulder CHaRM facility. Each day, one hundred or so of you come to our CHaRM window, recycling everything from plastic bags to electronics. Now you can recycle one more unusual material! We're accepting used cooking oil and turning it into biodiesel. See you at the window!

for Hard-to-Recycle Materials (CHaRM). As with many other pilot programs we've run, you did not disappoint—you proved the viability of this new material by bringing us precisely what we were looking for with few contaminants. The oil we collect at the CHaRM will be sent to a local refiner to produce biodiesel, an environmentally-friendly alternative to diesel for cars and trucks.

For folks who haven't recycled cooking oil with us before (and as a reminder to those who have), here's the scoop: We will accept any kind of oil used in cooking, such as vegetable, canola, sesame, sunflower and olive oils. Oil from food production, such as grease from cooking meat, is also accepted. A barrel is set up for recyclers to transfer oil from their containers into Eco-Cycle's. We ask that large solids be strained out (anything that won't easily fit down a funnel—solids can go into our compostables container, also at the CHaRM). We cannot recycle or dispose of used oil containers and ask that containers be taken home to be rinsed and then either reused or recycled. Motor oil or any type of oil that is used for purposes other than cooking will not be accepted. Check the Guide to Hard-to-Recycle Materials on [www.ecocycle.org](http://www.ecocycle.org) for a list of locations that accept used motor oil.

**Where:** CHaRM at 5030 "old" Pearl, Monday-Saturday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. (see page D for map)

**Charge:** No charge for residents or businesses

**YES** Cooking oil (such as canola, corn, vegetable, olive and sesame oils)

**NO** Motor oil or any oil used for purposes other than cooking

We cannot recycle or dispose of your oil container.

As with other hard-to-recycle materials, cooking oil will be accepted ONLY at our CHaRM location, 5030 "old" Pearl St., in Boulder (see map on page D). The CHaRM is open Monday-Saturday from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. The service is available to both residents and businesses at no charge, though businesses that regularly generate large quantities are encouraged to call Rocky Mountain Sustainable Enterprises at 303-544-1500 for information about arranging a pickup schedule. ♻️

## Green My Apple

Is a greener iPod really so much to ask? Apparently Apple thinks so. Apple has been the subject of intense environmental criticism since 2003 for failing to lead other electronics manufacturers in creating safer, more environmentally-designed electronics, in spite of its leftward-leaning, eco-conscious image. While Apple may be hip, its environmental practices rank near the bottom of the industry. Now Greenpeace and more than 70 other environmental and social groups have called on Apple to green up and clean up the design of their products.

Activists are demanding Apple

- set timelines for the phaseout of toxic PVC plastic and brominated flame retardants (see PVC and REACH articles on page 5) like Dell, HP and others;
- launch a voluntary global take-back and recycling program as Dell has done;
- expand its U.S. recycling program and stop lobbying against recycling legislation for electronics (companies like HP have supported it).



Visit [www.greenmyapple.com](http://www.greenmyapple.com) to take action and tell Apple they need to lead, not follow. ♻️

## Zero Waste Around the World

by Kate Mangione

### Change a Light Bulb, Change the World

How many Australians does it take to change a light bulb? If it's an incandescent, the answer will soon be none—there simply won't be any in Australia by 2010. Thanks to first-of-its-kind legislation, the 125-year old incandescent is being phased out in favor of its 21<sup>st</sup> century counterpart, the much more efficient compact fluorescent light bulb (CFL). Converting this nation of 20 million to CFLs will prevent an estimated 800,000 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions every year, as compact fluorescent light bulbs use one-fifth the electricity of an incandescent (and quickly pay for themselves through savings on electricity bills). As a smart and easy first step in carbon emission reduction, CFLs have generated attention in the U.S., too, where Philips Electronics and others are proposing legislation for an industry phase-out of incandescents by 2016. Law or not, CFLs make sense (and cents).

### Take-out Food is Short-lived but Polystyrene May Be Permanent

Polystyrene (a.k.a. "Styrofoam") take-out boxes may float, but their popularity is sinking fast as numerous cities and counties throughout California ban the toxic material in favor of recyclable or biodegradable alternatives. Oakland, San Francisco, Santa Cruz, Orange County and others have outlawed the foam foe because of its contribution to mounting marine debris and clogged storm drains. Made from non-renewable petroleum, polystyrene crumbles into small pieces that are potentially fatal to wildlife. The plastic pellets never actually biodegrade and cause almost perpetual pollution. The policy group Californians Against Waste said it best: "Polystyrene... is one of our country's most ubiquitous examples of over-processed, overabundant and unnecessary throw-away packaging." We couldn't agree more, and we'd like to send the same message in our community. Visit [www.ecocycle.org](http://www.ecocycle.org) to send letters to local restaurants and your city council telling them to put an end to the polystyrene plague and embrace recyclable and compostable packaging. For more information, check out [www.cawrecycles.org/issues/plastic\\_campaign](http://www.cawrecycles.org/issues/plastic_campaign).

### Bottling Up Our Landfills

We've all been there: You find yourself with an empty bottle of water but no recycling bin for miles. Do you toss it in your backpack and haul it around for hours, or do you stick it stealthily into one of those ever-present trash cans? If you choose the latter, you're not alone. According to the Container Recycling Institute, "About 18 million barrels of crude oil equivalent went down the drain last year when 2 million tons of PET bottles were landfilled instead of recycled." So what can you do? Take the water bottle pledge sponsored by the city of San Francisco and commit to reduce your consumption of bottled water, avoid bottled water waste, and choose safe and reusable containers when you need water on the go. See [www.sfenvironment.com](http://www.sfenvironment.com) to take the pledge today.

### Toxic Tragedy Continues in Africa

From petroleum byproducts to "donated" computer equipment, Africa continues to be a hotbed of illegal dumping of toxic waste from the developed world, including the U.S. In August 2006, fifteen people died and more than 80,000 sought medical attention in the Ivory Coast when chemical slops were unloaded on open dumps by a billion-dollar global commodities trading firm. On a more regular basis, boatloads of "donated" and "recycled" electronic waste—more than 75% of which is unusable—are openly burned, dumped in swamps and waterways, or buried in crude pits. The U.S. government never ratified the Basel Convention, which bans the export of hazardous wastes from wealthy countries to the Global South, so U.S. citizens and businesses need to be especially diligent about recycling electronics responsibly. To ensure your old PC is not part of this problem, choose recycling partners like Eco-Cycle who have signed the Pledge of True Stewardship and committed to the responsible domestic recycling of electronic scrap. Learn more about our commitment and its importance at [www.ecocycle.org/charm](http://www.ecocycle.org/charm).

### Opportunity or Risk: Businesses Weigh in on the Environment

Environmental impact is no longer a footnote on the corporate spreadsheet. U.S. shareholders are taking a serious look at a company's action or inaction when it comes to product toxicity and greenhouse gas emissions. A report by investment firm Innovest revealed commonplace consumer goods from electronics to personal care products are attracting unwanted scrutiny because of their questionable chemical composition, as a result of new precaution-based chemical regulations in Europe and California (see REACH on page 5). Investors are, in turn, taking precautions on the future profit potential of products' manufacturers. Greenhouse gases are also starting to look like a liability, so big name companies such as Alcoa, DuPont, General Electric, BP America and others have teamed up with national NGOs to craft policy recommendations for the federal government. But not everyone is on board. According to Ceres, a coalition for sustainable investment, the top ten list of companies lagging behind on action against climate change includes insurance company ACE, Bed Bath & Beyond, ExxonMobil, ConocoPhillips and several electric power and coal companies. With profits on the line, it's becoming clear there can be no distinction between what's good for the environment and what's good for the economy. To make green, you need to be green. Learn more at [www.ceres.org](http://www.ceres.org) and [www.greenbiz.com](http://www.greenbiz.com). ♻️



A glance across the globe reveals promising new commitments to Zero Waste and model programs for our community to emulate.

# Sweeping Chemical Reform Will Protect E.U. Citizens— What About the U.S.?

by Kate Mangione

A monumental policy shift is underway in the European Union that might just flip the chemical industry on its head, with implications that will trickle all the way down to our individual bloodstreams. Over the last 50 years, tens of thousands of chemicals have saturated our homes, our food and the products of our daily lives. As a result, every one of us carries a medley of flame retardants, pesticides, heavy metals and plastics additives in our bodies,

*Only a quarter of the 82,000 chemicals in use in the U.S. have ever been tested for toxicity.*

few of which have been adequately tested for their effects on us and on the environment. The mounting evidence linking some of these very common substances to cancer, hormone disruption, decreasing IQ and more is spurring colossal policy changes overseas that put an end to the practice of allowing industry to sell chemicals first and prove their safety later. New European legislation puts more responsibility on the chemical companies to prove their products are safe before they enter the soil, water, air or our bodies. Will the U.S. government follow suit or continue to gamble with public health?

One of the most hotly debated bills in decades, the Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals (REACH), is now law in the European Union. REACH is based on the idea “that industry itself is best placed to ensure



*Every one of us carries a medley of flame retardants, pesticides, heavy metals, plastics additives and more in our bodies—even the most vulnerable of our population.*

that the chemicals it manufactures and puts on the market in the E.U. do not adversely affect human health or the environment.” It sounds simple enough, but REACH is an about-face from current chemical policy across the globe.

## Current U.S. Policy Protects Industry Before Citizens

Under the U.S. regulatory system, it is up to government agencies or citizens to prove a chemical may cause harm and to build the case for regulation. If there is no evidence of potential harm, the chemical is marketed without testing. This provides no incentive for industry to provide data and places a huge burden on government agencies. As a result, only a quarter of the 82,000 chemicals in use in the U.S. have ever been tested for toxicity, according to *National Geographic*.

Conversely, REACH transfers much of the burden of proof to industry by requiring safety

data for all chemicals on the market—in other words, no data, no market. Manufacturers of “high concern” chemicals must demonstrate the risks of use are adequately controlled or that the benefits outweigh the costs with no viable alternatives. In the E.U., nearly 1,400 substances could be subject to this authorization process, such as those substances considered carcinogenic, mutagenic or toxic to reproduction or those that are persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic (PBT). Yet, these same substances could continue to be sold, without warning, in the U.S., unless our government takes similar action.

Not surprisingly, Europeans aren’t the only ones questioning the profusion and safety of modern chemicals. Canadian scientists recently declared an astounding 4,000 chemicals in widespread commercial use warranted in-depth safety assessments because of their potential risks to human health and wildlife.

## Local Action in Absence of Federal Leadership

While federal U.S. officials spent years lobbying the E.U. to water down REACH in the name of U.S. exports and corporate profits, state and local governments have been taking precautionary action here at home. Several states, such as Massachusetts and Maine, already hold stricter pollution, labeling and safety regulations for substances like lead and flame retardants. City governments from Boston to Seattle are banning products with certain chemicals like dioxin, mercury and phthalates, and creating organizational or municipal purchasing policies that give preference to less toxic, more recyclable products.

## Everyday products leave hazardous chemical traces in our bloodstream:

- Plastics additives bisphenol A and phthalates are found in water bottles, teething rings and wallpaper;
- Heavy metals like mercury, lead and cadmium are used in electronics;
- Flame retardants, such as PBDEs, are used on bedding, clothing, carpet and electronics;
- Water and grease repellants like PFCAs are used in Gore-Tex and non-stick cookware;
- Pesticides and insecticides, even those banned in the U.S., are found on imported food.

To learn more about how these chemicals affect human and environmental health, go to [www.chemicalbodyburden.org](http://www.chemicalbodyburden.org).

## Stand Up for Your Health

A precautionary approach is taking root, but these products are already in your bloodstream, on store shelves, and all around us. What can you do? First, get informed and ask retailers and manufacturers tough questions about what substances are used in the products you purchase. Second, buy non-toxic products to use at home, work, church, your child’s school—everywhere. Third, speak up. Tell public officials you are tired of industry profits taking precedence over public and environmental health. Tell your senator to support the Kids Safe Chemical Act, which would greatly strengthen current U.S. policy and force manufacturers to prove chemicals are safe, especially for our most vulnerable populations. It’s your choice, not the chemical industry’s, to decide what goes into your body—demand your government protect public health and match or exceed chemical safeguards set elsewhere. ♻️

# PVC – The Poison Plastic

by Eco-Cycle Staff

Do you have poison plastics in your home? Most of us do: the teething ring dangling from baby’s mouth, Fido’s chew toy, the plastic wrap storing food in the ‘fridge, even your shower curtain may be hiding a dangerous, dirty secret.

Polyvinyl chloride, also known as PVC or vinyl, has become one of the most widely-used plastics in everyday products and packaging. You can usually identify these plastics by the number 3 that appears inside the chasing arrows recycling symbol, often accompanied by the letters PVC or just V. It is found in toys, medical equipment, food packaging, water bottles, water pipes, electrical cables, building materials and much more. Despite its widespread use, PVC is commonly considered the most damaging of all plastics—to our health and our environment—throughout every stage of its production, use and disposal.

## Toxic to Make, Toxic to Use, Toxic to Toss

The primary chemicals used to make PVC are extremely hazardous, according to an alarming report by the Center for Health and Environmental Justice (CHEJ). Vinyl chloride is a known human carcinogen and ethylene dichloride is a suspected carcinogen. Throughout manufacturing, toxic byproducts from these chemicals are emitted into the air, water and land, causing acute and chronic health conditions for nearby inhabitants and threatening local ecosystems.

During use, plasticizers, or softeners, in PVC are prone to leaching, meaning they do not stay bound to the product. When children or pets chew on PVC toys, they can be ingesting toxic chemicals. One likely-to-leach chemical, di(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (DEHP), has been designated a probable carcinogen by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). But, you don’t have to be gnawing on PVC to pick up its toxins. PVC food packaging, such as plastic trays and plastic-wrap for foods like cheeses and meats, can leach into your food. Inhalation is another common means of exposure—that “new shower curtain” odor emitted by some vinyl products is actually carbon-containing chemicals off-gassing into the air. These volatile organic compounds (VOCs) can cause acute eye irritation, coughing, headaches, dizziness and nausea. According to the EPA, the long-term effects are liver, kidney and central nervous system damage, and even cancer.

Not surprisingly, PVC is neither recyclable nor safe to toss in the trash. Unfortunately for recyclers like Eco-Cycle, a PVC bottle looks a lot like a #1 PET bottle, a very recyclable material. Any #3 PVC plastic mistakenly entering the recycling stream can contaminate an entire load of #1 bottles. If landfilled, PVC poses a significant long-term environmental threat, as its chemical

additives can leach into groundwater. The incineration of PVC can form dioxins, often cited as the most toxic substance known to humankind.

## You Can Purge the Poison PVC

The good news is PVC is avoidable. Since PVC isn’t always labeled with a #3 or the letters PVC or V, be on the lookout for soft flexible plastic products with the distinct “new shower curtain” smell. For a full list of products that typically contain PVC, see the CHEJ website at [www.besafenet.com/pvc/pvcproducts.htm](http://www.besafenet.com/pvc/pvcproducts.htm).

If you do find products in your household containing PVC, let the manufacturer know you want them to use one of the many safe alternatives for virtually every PVC product or packaging material out there. If there is no content information, call the manufacturer to ask. ♻️



*Go to [www.ecocycle.org](http://www.ecocycle.org) to watch “Sam Suds and the Case of PVC, the Poison Plastic” for an entertaining overview of this very serious subject.*

## Take Action! Join the movement against PVC plastics.

The European Union has banned several toxic plasticizers, and the city of San Francisco has also banned these chemicals from children’s toys. While several major manufacturers and retailers in the U.S., such as Microsoft Corp. and Johnson & Johnson, are rejecting PVC packaging in favor of readily available, safer alternatives, others are lagging behind.

Tell Target the poison plastic is out of style. The mega-retailer is dragging behind other major companies in phasing out PVC products. Go to [www.ecocycle.org](http://www.ecocycle.org) to watch the video “Sam Suds and the Case of PVC, the Poison Plastic” and while there tell Target to go PVC-free.

While you are on our website, you can also tell Wal-Mart to completely eliminate products made from or packaged in PVC from its shelves.



# An End-of-the-School-Year Tradition: Eco-Cycle's "Locker Leftovers" Program

by Kary Shumpert

The last day of middle school and high school usually creates two predictable scenarios: euphoric students anticipating a carefree summer ahead and overworked cleaning crews dealing with the mess of paper, rotten lunches and pencil stubs piled in the hallways. Thanks to Locker Leftovers, a unique program started by Eco-Cycle's Schools Department five years ago, the once inevitable explosion of locker contents onto hallway floors and into overflowing trash cans is now a distant memory. Through Locker Leftovers, students are encouraged to salvage usable school supplies, so they may be used again through local charities, and to recycle as much as possible of whatever's left.

During the final two weeks of school, Eco-Cycle staff sets up reuse/recycle stations on site at eight schools. Student sponsor groups help spread the word about the upcoming locker cleanout days. The reuse/recycle stations are

placed conveniently near locker areas in hallways, and most trash cans are removed to ensure materials get to the reuse/recycle areas first. Every school is different, but typically students from each grade level are given 30-60 minutes to sort out their lockers. During this time, Eco-Cycle staffs each station to facilitate the process and answer questions about what materials are recyclable.

Reusable items are donated to many local charities including Goodwill, Emergency Family Assistance Association (EFAA), Family Resource Schools, and Outreach United



*Students participating in Eco-Cycle's Locker Leftovers program sort through old binders and forgotten lunch sacks and gym bags, uncovering items that can be recycled or donated to charity for reuse.*

redistributing reusable supplies. Teachers and departments that need lots of supplies—like art and special education programs—are taking materials directly from reuse bins and saving them in the classroom for the following year. Some teachers gather up materials

Resource (OUR) Center. In the past, materials were collected for local programs shipping school supplies to children in Afghanistan and Mexico.

As the Locker Leftovers program enters its fifth year, students and staff have become creative in

to have extras for students who might not be able to supply their own, while others keep a small source for those forgetful students who need to borrow materials from time to time. Small pencils find new life near computer card catalogues in the library, and, increasingly, students are putting their used supplies back into their backpacks to take home and use again the following year. After all, reuse is even better than recycling!

**In 2006, seven Boulder schools and one Superior school took part in the Locker Leftovers program. A total of 195 32-gallon containers of materials were diverted from the landfill for reuse and recycling. Thanks to the city of Boulder and the town of Superior for providing funding for the Locker Leftovers program!** ♻️

## Five New Green Star Schools Come on Board



Our Green Star Schools program is growing! Five more dedicated schools—Columbine Elementary, Eisenhower Elementary, Heatherwood Elementary, Lyons Elementary and Niwot Elementary—have partnered with Eco-Cycle to move toward Zero Waste through increased recycling, the implementation of composting, and special waste reduction activities. They join nine other Boulder County schools already participating in the first program in the nation to reduce waste in every aspect of school life.

Perhaps the most noticeable change for students at these schools is a new way of handling lunch leftovers. During the lunch hour, instead of dumping food scraps, plastic utensils and excess packaging into a trash can and rushing off to recess, kids use a special station where they deposit reusable serveware into hot, soapy water to be washed and reused; milk and juice containers into a recycling bin; and sandwich crusts, banana peels, other food leftovers, and non-recyclable paper, such as napkins and paper towels into a compost bin. Kids are also encouraged to eliminate trash in the first place by bringing a waste-free lunch, replacing overpackaged meats with Zero Waste alternatives, such as cloth lunch bags, cloth napkins, reusable utensils, and reusable or recyclable drink and food containers. Students who opt to order food from the cafeteria menu are served lunch in reusable bowls and cups rather than polystyrene ("Styrofoam") and eat with washable cutlery. By purchasing with Zero Waste in mind, school staff have eliminated disposables from Green Star Schools' cafeterias.

It's not just the reduction of lunchtime waste that's impressive at these schools—it's the commitment students, teachers, kitchen staff, custodial staff and administrators have made to reduce waste all day long. Throughout the halls and classrooms, discards are treated differently. Recycling

and composting bins—not trash cans—are ubiquitous. Even in the washrooms, students are reminded they are part of a very special program: Compost containers have replaced trash cans for used paper towels and tissues.

Congratulations to our new and continuing Green Star Schools for working toward Zero Waste with Eco-Cycle!

Bear Creek Elementary  
Boulder Community School  
of Integrated Studies  
Columbine Elementary  
Creskide Elementary  
Douglass Elementary  
Eisenhower Elementary  
Foothill Elementary

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Niwot Elementary ♻️

### Thanks to our generous Green Star Schools sponsors:

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For more information about the Green Star Schools program, visit our website at [www.ecocycle.org](http://www.ecocycle.org).

## CU Update

by Sierra Sinclaire Brashear  
with the Environmental Center, University of Colorado at Boulder

It's spring time again, which means CU has been busy with Recycle Mania, a yearly ten-week waste reduction competition among more than 200 colleges and universities across the United States. Campuses participating in the competition are challenged to increase campus-wide recycling rates, while at the same time decreasing overall waste.

During the first half of this year's Recycle Mania, CU has remained in the top 30 among the 202 schools that entered. However, the CU Recycling Outreach Team's goal is to make it into the top-ten best recycling schools in the nation. School placement is determined by overall diversion rate.

So far this year, CU has diverted 28.6% of its garbage from the landfill. While it's great to be in the top 30, the CU Recycling Outreach Team knows the university could be doing better. To that end, the team is working to educate the campus community through programs created for students and faculty.

To help kick off Recycle Mania 2007, CU Recycling hosted the Recycled Art and Products Extravaganza where artists and vendors from all over Colorado brought great products made from recycled material to sell and display.

CU Recycling, in partnership with the CU Freshman Council, also hosted the third annual Recycling X-games. Students and staff alike participated in games such as the Dumpster Dive, Pizza Box Throw, Phone Book Shot-put, Re-Ball and a recycled art contest.

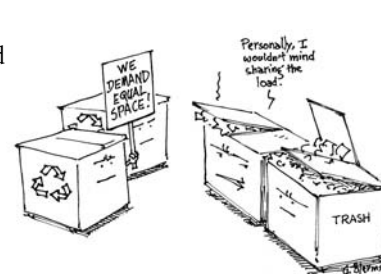
As a whole, the CU campus continues to be a national leader among campus recycling programs. In the 2005-2006 school year, CU saved 15,366 fully-grown trees, 7,481,040 gallons of water through recycling, and enough greenhouse gases were prevented from entering the atmosphere to equal 1,555 cars taken off the road for a whole year. ♻️

## Louisville Next to Declare Equal Space for Recycling

by Jen Friedman

In February 2007, the city of Louisville decided to lead the way toward a more environmentally-responsible Colorado by joining several nearby towns, including Boulder, Broomfield and Superior, in adopting an Equal Space Ordinance (ESO). The ordinance, passed unanimously by an enthusiastic Louisville City Council, requires architects of all new and significantly remodeled commercial developments provide as much space for recycling containers as they do for trash receptacles. Eco-Cycle volunteers attended the council meeting, and many other residents emailed and telephoned to show their support for "Changing the Rules" in favor of Zero Waste in their community.

The Louisville Resource Conservation Advisory Board (LRCAB) first made Equal Space a priority in its recommendations to city council in 2004. Since then, resource recovery has become



a prominent theme in many local communities—city councils in several Boulder and Broomfield County communities have passed Zero Waste resolutions and green building codes. The Louisville ESO complements the recent Green Points Building ordinances adopted in Longmont and currently being considered by Louisville.

As Mark Persichetti, a member of the LRCAB notes, "The Equal Space Ordinance is recognized as a first step solution to revamping the way we think about and plan for waste."

Designing communities to be more resource efficient and environmentally conscious not only eliminates current barriers to recycling, but it will also teach future generations that planning for conservation is the key to a sustainable future and a better quality of life. Congratulations to the city of Louisville in taking a big step toward that future. ♻️

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# Help build a Zero Waste community!

In this issue of the *Eco-Cycle Times*, you'll find many ways to personally take steps to work toward Zero Waste:

- Attend a Zero Waste community event like the Boulder Farmers' Market and buy some Microbe Brew compost tea for your garden while you're there (p. 1)
- Recycle your cooking oil into biodiesel at the CHaRM (p. 4)
- Throw your own Zero Waste party with our new event kit (p. 1)
- Patronize one of the many businesses working toward Zero Waste with Eco-Cycle (p. 3)
- Use our many tools and online resources to reduce waste, recycle and take action (p. 2)
- Become an Eco-Leader volunteer to help us get the word out about Zero Waste, change the rules and encourage recycling (p. 6)

You can also make a personal, tax-deductible contribution to Eco-Cycle. Your gift will support Eco-Cycle's work to create "Zero Waste Zones" in every sector of our community— homes, neighborhoods, schools, businesses, municipalities and events.

To donate, please clip the coupon below or visit [www.ecocycle.org](http://www.ecocycle.org).

Here is my gift of: ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$250 ☐ \$500 ☐ \$1,000 Founders' Society ☐ Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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**Donate online at [www.ecocycle.org](http://www.ecocycle.org)**



**eco-cycle**  
Working to Build Zero Waste Communities

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