



FASTEST, EASIEST & CHEAPEST CLIMATE SOLUTION

Looking for proven, ready to implement, powerful strategies to reduce carbon pollution quickly? Look no further than your trash can! Recycling and composting are two of the fastest, easiest and most cost-effective ways your local community can reduce its climate impact.

RECYCLING REDUCES ENERGY CONSUMPTION

By far the biggest benefits of recycling come not from keeping materials out of landfills, but by reducing the energy used to make new products. For example, using recycled aluminum cans to make a new can uses 95 percent less energy than making a can from virgin bauxite ore—that's enough energy to power a TV for 3 hours. By reducing energy used in manufacturing, we're directly reducing carbon pollution. **By recycling and composting each year, Americans reduce the nation's carbon emissions comparable to taking 38 million cars off the road for a year.** That's more than the total number of vehicles that were registered in the State of California in 2016.

PROVEN, COST-EFFECTIVE SOLUTIONS

Zero Waste strategies such as recycling, composting and reuse are proven solutions that can be implemented NOW. Leading cities are already recycling nearly 70 percent of their discards, yet our national recycling rate is only 35 percent, which means we know how to double our recycling rate today. We don't need to wait for new technologies—we can put proven policies, programs, and infrastructure in place today to start reducing carbon pollution immediately and cost-effectively.



PROTECT
NATURAL
RESOURCES



CONSERVE
ENERGY AND
WATER



REDUCE
GREENHOUSE GAS
EMISSIONS

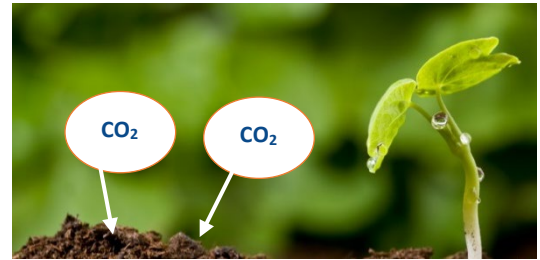
Every ton of material recycled saves an average of three tons of carbon emissions.

Together we can have a tremendous positive impact on our climate: **Recycling 90 percent of our discards by 2030 would reduce U.S. greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by the equivalent of closing more than 80 U.S. coal-fired power plants.**

According to the EPA, **42 percent of U.S. carbon pollution comes from our stuff and our food – how we make it, transport it, use it, and throw it away.** These are called “consumption emissions.” The more we buy and throw away stuff, the more energy it takes to make new stuff, and the faster climate change accelerates.

COMPOSTING REDUCES CLIMATE DAMAGE

Applying compost to our gardens, farms, and undeveloped lands is a critically important opportunity to keep more carbon out of the atmosphere and to start reversing the damage already done. Our soils actually store three times more carbon than plants, **making compost an incredible carbon sink.** Research in California found that applying less than a half-inch of compost to just five percent of California’s rangelands would reduce GHG emissions by the equivalent of taking six million cars off the road each year.



WHY WE'RE OVERLOOKING THE RECYCLING SOLUTION

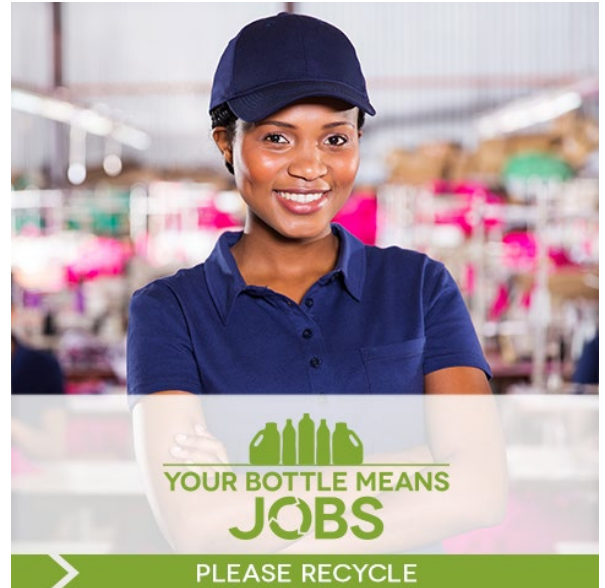
Zero Waste is a top-tier climate action strategy, on par with energy efficiency and alternative transportation. Yet it’s often overlooked as just a “trash” issue. If your city tracks its carbon emissions, then chances are that the climate benefits of recycling are being significantly underestimated. In fact, most cities don’t count the savings from recycling at all because the tracking system only measures emissions going up (i.e. from smokestacks and tailpipes), not avoided emissions from recycling or solar panels.

Making matters worse, most GHG inventories only measure what is generated within the city limits, including the local power plant or cars on the road. But when it comes to what we eat and all the products we consume, they’re almost always made somewhere else in the world. These “consumption emissions” are not counted locally either. When cities include consumption emissions in their calculations, their carbon footprint increases by an average of 35 percent. By not accurately measuring the problem, we’re overlooking a key climate solution that could greatly reduce global carbon pollution. The good news is it’s easy to reduce consumption emissions through local programs that increase recycling and composting, reduce food waste, and promote sharing and smart purchasing.

ACT NOW FOR CLIMATE, JOBS AND MORE!

Zero Waste is a climate solution that can be easily implemented both at the individual level and through collective local community actions. Recycling and composting are accessible, simple solutions that everyone can participate in every day—at home, at work, at school and everywhere. Not everyone can afford solar panels or has the option of using alternative transportation, but everyone can recycle if we make it easy and convenient.

Zero Waste is a “win-win” climate solution because it also creates local jobs and boosts local economies, builds healthy soils and food, prevents pollution, and protects natural resources. There’s no reason not to do more today!



3 WAYS ZERO WASTE REDUCES CARBON POLLUTION



SAVES ENERGY

Making new products from recycled materials saves energy, which reduces fossil fuel use. For example, using recycled aluminum cans to make new cans uses 95% less energy than using virgin bauxite ore—recycling just one can saves enough energy to power a computer for 3 hours.^{xii}



REDUCES METHANE

Recycling and composting reduce methane emissions from landfills. Methane traps 84 times more heat than carbon dioxide, making it a powerful greenhouse gas and a top priority for reducing carbon pollution.^{xiii}



STORES CARBON IN SOILS

Composting creates a nutrient rich soil amendment that can help our soils actually pull carbon out of the atmosphere, which helps to reverse the damage already done. Our soils actually store three times more carbon than plants, making compost an incredible carbon sink.^{xiv}