

Environmental benefits of recycling

Thousands of tons of recyclables circulate through Washington’s recycling facilities every day. Recycling not only prevents pollution from landfilling and incinerating materials, it also reduces the environmental burden of extracting and manufacturing virgin materials.

Common recyclables in 2016

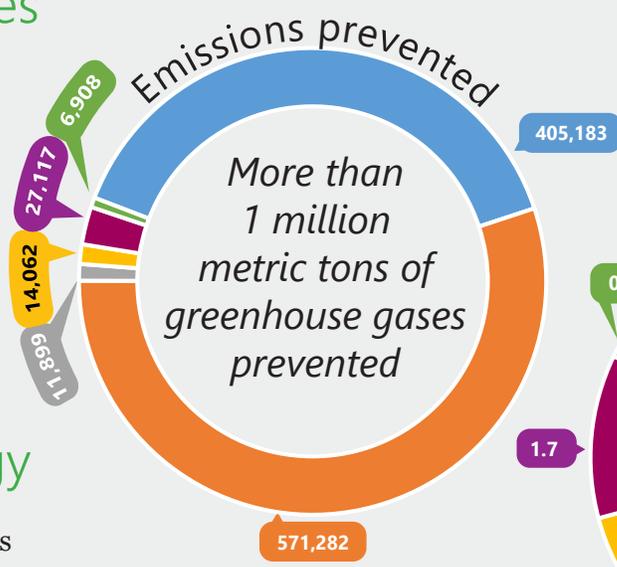


Washingtonians recycled **1.3 million tons** of these six materials in 2016

That’s **144,000 truckloads of material¹** becoming new products rather than going to waste. And when manufacturers don’t have to extract virgin materials, they reduce greenhouse gas emissions and save energy.

Recycling prevents greenhouse gases

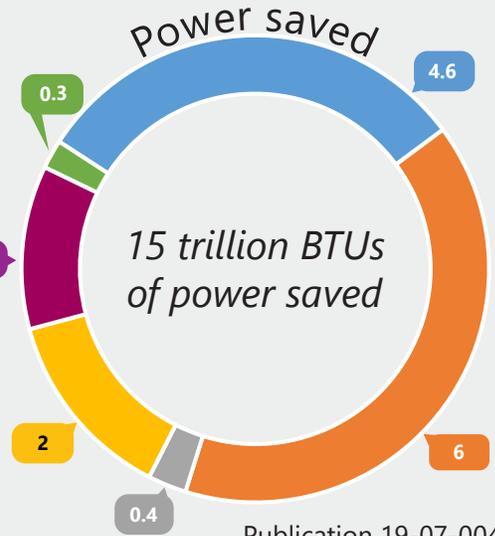
It would take **4.5 million acres of forest³** to absorb the emissions saved by recycling these materials – more than double the size of the Olympic, Mount Rainier and North Cascades national parks combined.



Washingtonians recycled **44-percent** of their municipal solid waste in 2016

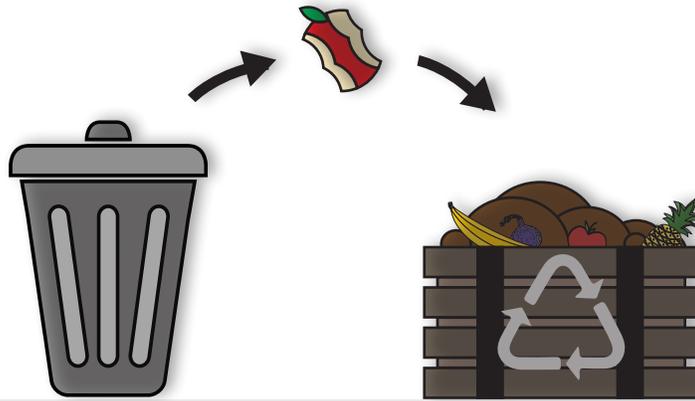
And saves energy

Recycling these six materials saved enough energy to power nearly **130,300 homes²** for a year.



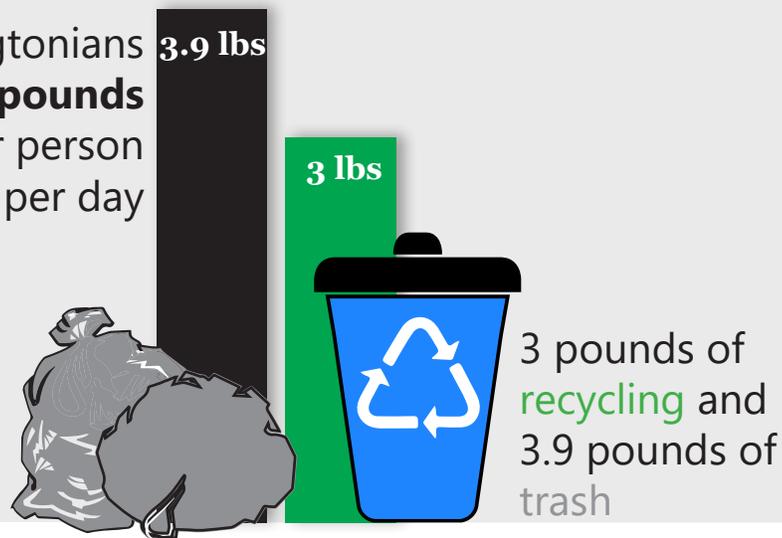
Recycling organics feeds compost instead of landfills

Washingtonians recovered **2.3 million tons** – that’s 256,000 truckloads¹ – of organics in 2016. Composted food scraps and yard debris reduced greenhouse gases by **69,000 passenger vehicles²** driven for a year.



Up to **43 percent** of residential waste in Washington could be composted.

Washingtonians create **6.9 pounds** of waste per person per day



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Recycling is only one piece of the puzzle

Recycling is an essential piece of the puzzle, but it’s not the whole picture. Our goal is to reduce environmental impacts, including climate impacts, through all stages of a product’s life cycle – not only its end stage.

Sources:

1. www.waste360.com/blog/how-green-was-my-garbage-truck.
2. EPA Waste Reduction Model (WARM): <https://www.epa.gov/warm>.
3. EPA’s greenhouse gas equivalencies calculator: www.epa.gov/energy/greenhouse-gas-equivalencies-calculator.

To request ADA accomodation, visit <https://ecology.wa.gov/accessibility>, call Ecology at 360-407-6000, Relay Service 711, or TTY 877-833-6341.