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## **National Recycling Month Highlights Opportunities, Challenges for Increasing Recycling**

*Washington's recycling rate is 49%, significantly higher than the national average of 32%. The national goal is 50%, as set by the Environmental Protection Agency.*

*The WA recycling & waste reduction industry is 4.1x carbon net zero when accounting for materials successfully recycled or composted*

**WHAT:** National Recycling Month is observed nationally and here in Washington as an opportunity to recognize the critical role of recycling in advancing values and policies upholding environmental stewardship.

**WHEN:** November 2024 – on November 15, [America Recycles Day](#), as recognized by the United States Environmental Protection Agency, highlights the “importance and impact of recycling, which has contributed to American prosperity and the protection of our environment.”

**WHO:** The Washington Refuse & Recycling Association (WRRA) represents solid waste companies in Washington State. Many of our companies have been in their communities for decades and generations. Whether they are family-owned or publicly-traded, their mission is to promote environmentally and economically sustainable solid waste and recycling services. Accomplishing this mission is made possible through a decades-long partnership with consumers, counties, cities and private investments in reliable, curbside service and sorting facilities.

**WASHINGTON** – Today the Washington Refuse & Recycling Association is looking ahead to National Recycling Month, which is observed each year throughout November. November 15, America Recycles Day, is an annual reminder of the critical role that recycling plays in the advancement of environmental stewardship.

“All Washingtonians are proud of our commitment to recycling and reducing waste. It’s part of who we are,” **said Brad Lovaas, executive director of the WRRA.** “National Recycling Month is a great reminder of how we cannot celebrate our success without also working to reduce waste even further. Our focus in the upcoming Legislative Session will be to advance policies that support consumers, protect them from misinformation, expand the market for recycled content, fight against littering and identify the best investments to increase recycling that fits each local communities’ needs.”

## Tips for Recycling At Home

- ⇒ “Empty, Clean and Dry” – help reduce contamination of recyclable goods by making sure they are empty, clean and dry before putting them into your bin.
- ⇒ “No bag, please” – plastic bags lining a bin are not necessary for ensuring your recyclable items end up at the right place after they leave your curb.
- ⇒ “Check the label” – just because the circular arrows are on the label, [doesn't mean the item is actually recyclable](#) in your area (or anywhere). If you aren't sure, check with your local utility or curbside service provider.
- ⇒ Don't put garbage in your recycling or organics bin!
- ⇒ “No snacks!” – our recycling truck drivers don't want your food, please help reduce contamination of the recycling stream by keeping food (and all organics) out of your recycling bin.

## Statewide Opportunities to Increase Recycling & Reduce Waste

- Expand requirements for recycled content, building on a 2021 groundbreaking Washington law that requires certain packaging contain a minimum amount of recycled content.
- Improve truth in labeling by standardizing labeling to avoid confusion and misinformation, making it easier for consumers to sort items into the right bins, reducing recycling contamination.
- Greater producer accountability so that packaging manufacturers will demonstrate a greater commitment to reducing waste and increasing the recyclability of the materials being introduced into our state.
- Protect funding that supports anti-littering programs across the state. An item has no chance of being recycled if it's not put into a recycling bin.

## Quick Facts About Waste Reduction & Recycling in WA

- About 14,700 workers employed in solid waste and recycling industry to drive trucks, sort materials, oversee landfills and much more.
- Average household's monthly bill for curbside recycling service is \$8-10 (or 35 cents per day), supporting an average of 8 monthly pickups for bins for trash (4), recycling (2) and organics (2), offering reliable service unique to local needs.
- 87% of WA residents have access to curbside service and those who don't may access 108 dropbox locations in their communities

The WRRRA strongly supports the use of data for determining the best statewide and local investments for reducing waste and increasing recycling, advocating for a statewide needs assessment to directly inform Washington's next investments to further increase the recycling rate.

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### About the Washington Refuse & Recycling Association

The [Washington Refuse & Recycling Association](#) (WRRRA) represents solid waste companies and professionals in Washington State. Our mission is to promote environmentally and economically sustainable solid waste and recycling services within our state's regulatory system. The WRRRA is a partnership with the public in pursuit of environmental stewardship through recycling and reducing waste.