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Background

Zero Waste USA was founded as the GrassRoots Recycling Network in 1996 to promote a vision of a world without waste – no burn, no bury, no toxics. In 2014, we launched Zero Waste USA to provide the tools and resources to inspire communities to embrace and to achieve Zero Waste. We are a founding organization of the [Zero Waste International Alliance](#) and the U.S. National Affiliate for business and community recognition. We also host the National Zero Waste Advisory Council, Zero Waste Communities Yahoo Group and the Green Yes List Serve, and co-sponsor the Zero Waste Brain Trust. We are a founding member of the [U.S. Zero Waste Business Council](#) and we support its work in certifying Zero Waste businesses that meet the strict yet achievable requirements of the Zero Waste International Alliance business recognition program.

National Sustainable Materials Management Plan Recommendations

- Define “Sustainable Materials Management” as “Zero Waste” and adopt the internationally peer-reviewed [definition of Zero Waste](#).
- Set national goals for making progress toward Zero Waste, including:
 - Redesign products and packaging for repair, reuse, recycling or composting
 - Maximize diversion of discarded materials from landfills and incinerators
 - Invest in collection and processing infrastructure for recycling and composting
 - Develop Resource Recovery Parks at landfills and transfer stations
- Emphasize our shared responsibility and identify appropriate roles for federal, state and local governments, businesses and individuals in achieving Zero Waste.
- Sustainable Materials Management should not include the combustion of discarded materials, biomass, or any other fuels for energy generation, including incineration in conventional incinerators and incineration of discarded materials along with coal in coal plants, boilers, cement kilns or other facilities.
- Any life cycle analyses for evaluating options should follow the [Zero Waste Hierarchy of Highest and Best Use](#).
- Ask U.S. EPA to provide tools and resources for Zero Waste, including:
 - Zero Waste case studies, model contracts, resource guides and toolkits.
 - Conduct training program for state and local staff on Zero Waste.
 - End corporate subsidies for wasting (in mining, extraction and construction)
- Document the role that Zero Waste can play in reducing the impacts of climate change through recycling, composting and application of [compost on rangelands](#).