



Will Sagar  
Executive Director  
Southeast Recycling Development Council  
102 College Station  
Suite 3 #242  
Brevard, NC 28712  
(828) 507-0123

The Southeast Recycling Development Council (SERDC) works in eleven states to unite government and industry to promote sustainable recycling programs. The Southeast is home to manufacturers that rely upon material from recycling programs, which they use as feedstock in the production of consumer goods. A recent SERDC study identified 206 such manufacturing facilities employing 48,500 people in manufacturing jobs. This represents a significant driver in the southern economy.

That recycling is beneficial for the environment is a virtually uncontested proposition. What is becoming increasingly more obvious is that recycling contributes to the economic health of the region's economy. Recycling industry jobs studies in North Carolina show steady increases over the last two decades, notably posting an increase during the worst of the recent recession. South Carolina reports a 44% increase in recycling jobs since 2006.

The use of recycled content in manufacturing saves energy, which saves money, giving our companies a competitive edge in the global market. Feedstock can often be obtained from urban centers, reducing transportation costs. Recycling, as a part of Sustainable Material Management, is supporting the resurgence of domestic American manufacturing.

- US Consumer product producers are increasingly incorporating recycled content in their packaging.
  - One reason is that there is generally a cost and/or energy savings in doing so.
  - Secondly, but important, a growing number of consumers are making product choices based on recycled content and recyclability. US industries seek to capture these sales.
- US CPGs have recently invested in recycling to make available more recovered material for packaging.
  - The Recycling Partnership, launched by SERDC in 2014, is supported by ten US brands and is making grants to select cities to improve infrastructure and outreach. It has completed its first round of awards and is set to be bigger in the second year.
  - The Walmart Closed Loop Fund has raised \$100 MM to make zero interest loans to local governments to improve collection.

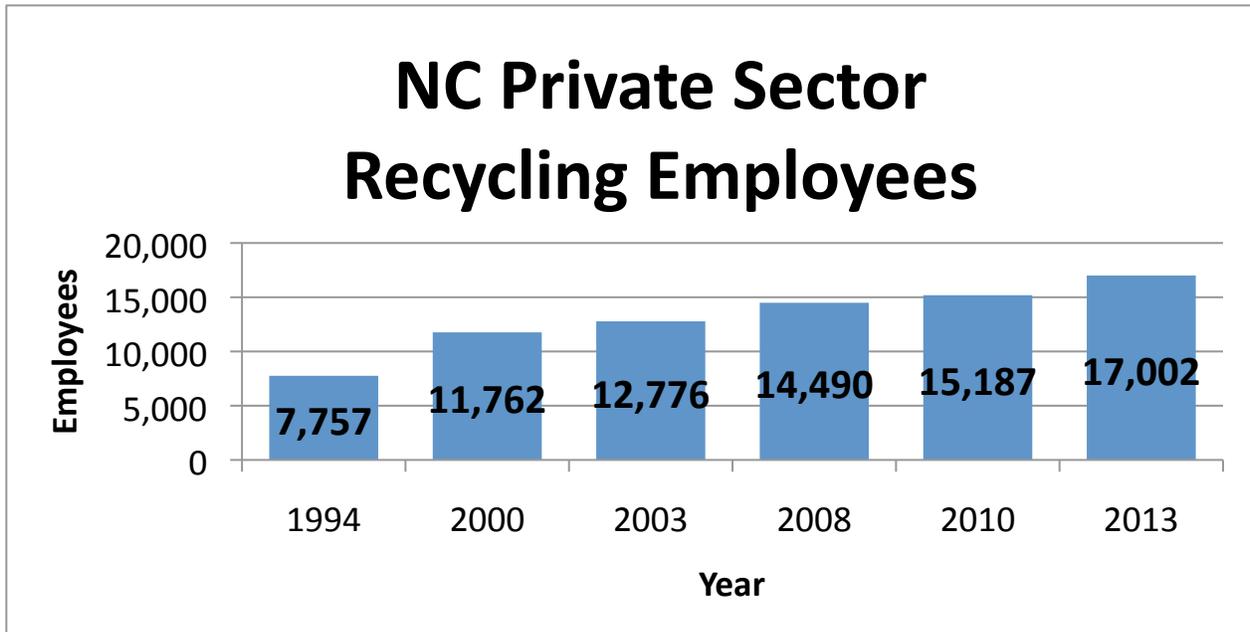
These efforts are not in isolation; several other initiatives are privately funded with the intention to improve material capture across the country. But industry cannot solve the problem of material lost to disposal

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**Eleven states united to develop and promote sustainable recycling programs.**

**Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana,  
Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia**

alone. Policy is needed to bring our societal behavior to universal participation in recycling and budget funding for universal access to recycling collection should be created.



South Carolina 2014 study findings show that recycling contributes:

- \$13 billion in total economic impact – double the impact of \$6.5 billion in 2006,
- 54,121 jobs, up 44 percent from 37,440 impacted jobs eight years ago,
- \$2.7 billion in labor income, up 80 percent from the 2006 report,
- \$329 million in state and local taxes.

Recommendations:

- Policy is needed to bring our societal behavior to universal participation in recycling and budget funding for universal access to recycling collection should be created.
- State level policy is needed to bring our societal behavior to universal participation in recycling, each state legislature should adopt statutes making recycling mandatory. Certain commodities with high value should not be disposed.
- Additionally state grant funding should be directed for the expansion of recycling collection with the goal that recycling has equal access to disposal.

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