

Recycling Industries Coalition Policy Position

The Recycling Industries Coalition represents industries and companies¹ that are concerned about the potential degradation of recyclable materials when they are mixed with solid waste. Our experience, along with that of thousands of American communities and businesses, shows that separate collection of recyclables continues to be the most effective and cost-efficient method of maximizing the collection of clean recyclable raw materials. Simply put, collecting recyclable materials in the same bin as garbage degrades the quality of those collected materials.

Preserving the quality of recyclable materials, from collection through production into new products, will ultimately expand both the supply and the demand for recyclable feedstock for the world's manufacturing industries. Coalition members know that a facility processing waste and recyclables mixed together, known as a Dirty MRF, may harm recycling. When processing recyclables mixed with solid waste, it can result in the recyclable materials being reduced to being reprocessed into lower quality products. Mixing these valuable recyclables with food, diapers, and other contaminants will severely degrade them.

The private and public sectors have invested billions of dollars in infrastructure enabling citizens and businesses to reduce, reuse and recycle efficiently. The \$270 billion dollar recycling industry supports hundreds of thousands of direct and indirect jobs. Maintaining the current large job base in the overall recycling network as well as the creation of new well-paying jobs in the recycling and manufacturing industries in the United States is critically important. Recycling conserves non-renewable natural resources, helps numerous industries reduce their energy use and significantly reduces the amount of waste sent to landfills and incinerators. Products made from recycled materials can be recycled many times, whereas recyclables converted to energy, burned or landfilled are lost forever. Finally, recycling is sustainable and results in a significant reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

Recyclables aren't waste, let's keep it that way.

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