



## The Big Financial Picture

Fiscal policies and priorities that discriminate against reduction and recycling distort the role of market forces, undermining investment in recycling, composting, reuse and waste reduction.

- **Full Cost Accounting** - Investment decisions must incorporate full and fair comparisons of the economic and environmental costs reduction, recycling and disposal options.
- **Tax Incentives** - Federal and state tax codes should provide for tax exempt financing or tax incentives for recycling investment.
- **True Costs of Disposal** - Too often, the benefits of avoided disposal costs are ignored or underestimated. Full cost accounting analysis should include those benefits.
- **Federal/State Government Support** - Programs should be developed or facilitated by federal and state government to encourage the maximum investment, research and innovation possible.
- **Program Planning** - Local governments should have comprehensive waste plans in place to assure, among other goals, cost effective and efficient collection and processing that will generate quality material for market.

## Quantity, Quality, Transparency

Steady and consistent streams of high quality recyclable commodities are not possible unless local programs...

- Are efficient
- Have high participation rates
- Generate the lowest contamination rates possible

**Accountability** - It's also important that local program managers hold their collectors and processors accountable so as to assure proper, cost efficient practices that maximize diversion and commodity sales and income. (Diversion is what goes in the front door. Recycling is what's marketed and the true measure of success.)

**Transparency** - One component of this is transparency in how much material is ultimately recovered and where it ends up. Besides confirming proper recycling, this also reassures the public that material is not ending up in the trash or being used for alternative daily landfill cover.

More on how local programs can achieve these goals is detailed in NRC's related policy fact sheet on collection best management practices.

## Cooperative Marketing

Regional or cooperative marketing efforts often make sense, especially for small and medium sized programs.

- **Cooperation** - Marketing cooperatives of various sizes and structures have proven to be successful in improving processing efficiency and enhancing marketing opportunities.
- **Rural Access** - These efforts could service larger geographic areas with hub and spoke systems that provide recycling access for rural regions...
- **Multi-municipal Marketing** - ... Or they may be as simple as cooperative marketing ventures among neighboring municipalities or counties.



*Designing products and packaging for recyclability is crucial to the success and economic viability of recycling. While true of all recyclable materials, the wide variety of plastics and additives makes plastics especially challenging. NRC applauds and supports efforts like those of the Association of Plastic Recyclers Design Guide for Plastics Recyclability. (<http://www.plasticsrecycling.org/apr-design-guide/apr-design-guide-home>)*

## Design for Recyclability

Manufacturers have not generally factored into design or manufacturing of products the environmental liabilities or costs to consumers of disposal, resource depletion, climate change, habitat loss and ozone depletion.

- **Manufacturers' Evaluation** - Manufacturers are encouraged to evaluate the environmental liabilities or costs of their products or packaging before introducing them into the marketplace. This includes but is not limited to:
  - Use of hazardous components
  - Economically practical recyclability
  - Technically feasible recyclability
- **Design for Repair and Recyclability** - NRC encourages and hopes to work with industry groups to establish design recommendations for recyclability of single use packaging and for repair of durable consumer products. This may include, but not be limited to programs like:
  - The Association of Plastic Recyclers Design Guide for Plastic Recyclability
  - The Basal Action Network conventions and the Green Electronics Council EPEAT standards for electronics
  - The Institute for Scrap Recycling Industries Scrap Specifications standards
- **Standards and Labeling** - EPA, in cooperation with state governments and appropriate non-profit and industry groups, should develop standardized accounting models and labeling. These strategies should account for the following.
  - **Environmental and Economic Costs** - Accurately measure and compare environmental and economic costs.
  - **Labeling to Facilitate Recycling** - Encourage and facilitate recycling and composting through standardized product and packaging recycling labeling. This should include the development of a national education program to inform consumers and producers of the benefit and use of these labels.
  - **Standard Definitions** - These accounting and labeling strategies should include uniform definitions and guidelines for reusability, recyclability, recycled content, biodegradability, compostability and toxicity.