



## National Recycling Coalition What We Do, 2024

The National Recycling Coalition (NRC) is the oldest non-profit recycling advocacy organization in the US, founded in 1978. Its leaders, members and affiliates include practitioners from across the country, representing decades of expertise in materials recovery and sustainable materials management.

Platinum  
Transparency  
2023

**Candid.**

NRC is a member-based organization connected to more than 12,000 individuals, including state recycling organization members and other nonprofits and allies, united as a platform to provide a deliberate, coordinated and concerted national voice for recycling, with a guiding principle of “Together we are powerful.”

Your tax-deductible contributions “investment” enables and can be leveraged through the NRC to accomplish the following strategic outcomes:

- Advocate for the reduction of consumption impacts and promote community-based circularity solutions (for example, reuse and repair cafes to keep products operable and out of landfills).
- Provide education, training, employment, and workforce development for living wage career pathways and entrepreneurship to advance the circular economy.

### WHY?

- *Provisioning of goods (including consumer goods, packaging, and food) is responsible for about 42 percent of all global greenhouse gas emissions.<sup>1</sup>*
- *Reducing, reusing, recycling and composting are critical components of a comprehensive strategy to meet national, state and local climate action planning goals, through material decarbonization. They are essential pillars of circularity. The NRC is a voice for decarbonizing the planet, by maximizing America’s participation in consuming and managing resources more responsibly.*

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<sup>1</sup> *Opportunities to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions through Materials and Land Management Practices*, US EPA Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response, Sept. 2009.

- Advance the tenet that circularity and building circular infrastructure are key components of state, local, and community centered **Climate Action Plans** and implementation, with systemic and coordinated efforts to advance responsible consumption through reducing, reusing, recycling and composting program implementation and optimization, all proven climate protection strategies.
- Promote the ‘**recycling is infrastructure**’ concept and encourage policies and funding mechanisms to ensure broad access to convenient municipal and community-based circularity (including reduce, reuse, recycling, and composting) assets and programs, for all American residents, businesses and industries located in both urban and rural areas.
- Champion circularity (including reduce, reuse, recycling, and composting) solutions which enhance and build thriving communities and increase a culture of sustainability and resiliency through equity.
- Continue to be a ‘voice of truth’ to dispel myths and clarify confusion about reduce, reuse, recycling, and composting backed by science and reputation.

**The National Recycling Coalition is US-based, but its decades of work extend globally, and are in alignment with the UN Sustainable Development Goals 9, 11, 12 and 13, as described below.**

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



[The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries. The SDGs recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests.



### **Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.**

The NRC's dogged advancement of “**recycling as infrastructure**” and its efforts to activate members and allies to participate in seeking funding is directly aligned with SDG 9, which urges countries, including the US, to “build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation... with increased resource-use efficiency and greater adoption of clean and environmentally sound technologies and industrial processes”.



### **Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.**

For more than 40 years, the NRC has directed attention to “...municipal and other waste management,” with a current emphasis on improving regional development planning to correct environmental justice issues, in urban, peri-urban and rural areas. Further, NRC communications efforts connect resource responsibility to decarbonization, to “substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters...”.



## **Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.**

Throughout its 40-year history, well-prior to the SDGs, the National Recycling Coalition has been an advocate for sustainable consumption and production. The organization's current focus on advancing responsible materials management to manifest a desired circular economy is directly aligned with SDG 12: "achieving sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources"; "substantially reducing waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling, and reuse"; and advocating for sustainable procurement practices, sharing best practices and building markets for recycled content.

Further, the NRC and its allies are longtime champions of food waste minimization at all levels, supporting farmers, food processors and compost program operators in managing food waste and harnessing methane gas to achieve decarbonization.

The organization's 2023 stance on chemical recycling (which is fuel production and not recycling) supports SDG 12's stated objectives to "achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment."

The NRC has long-supported the use of recycled plastic, which reduces the need for fossil fuel extraction and processing impacts of producing virgin plastic, thus helping to protect "the poor and the affected communities" from environmental pollution and health impacts.



## **Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.**

The NRC's 2023 Strategic Plan emphasizes that responsible materials management, including reducing, reusing, recycling and composting, IS climate protection, and that advancing recycling in the US constitutes "taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts".

In 2020 and 2021, NRC members took an active role in working with allies to ensure that a US federal infrastructure bill would include recycling to address climate change as a vital infrastructure need. The NRC website and member communications have always and will continue to "improve education, awareness raising...on climate change mitigation," and support the UN's "goal of mobilizing jointly \$100 billion annually (by 2020)...to address the needs of

developing countries” to adopt meaningful mitigation actions (such as materials management to decarbonize the planet and protect the climate).

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Distilled version:

The National Recycling Coalition (NRC), founded in 1978, is the oldest US non-profit recycling advocacy group. It unites over 12,000 members and affiliates to champion recycling with a focus on:

1. Advocating for reduced consumption and promoting circular solutions like repair cafes.
2. Providing education, training, and workforce development for circular economy careers.

Why? Because goods provision contributes to 42% of global greenhouse gas emissions. Recycling, reuse, and composting are vital for climate action plans.

NRC promotes circularity as part of these plans, advocating for:

- Circular infrastructure in Climate Action Plans.
- Recognizing recycling as infrastructure.
- Equity in access to circular programs.
- Thriving communities and sustainability.
- Dispelling myths with science-based information.