

Facts about the Recycling & Reuse Industries

Recycling & Reuse Industry is a Significant Economic Player

Industry Valued at \$35 Billion in Five States

with Employment Topping 100,000

From the Northeast Recycling Council, Inc.

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According to a recent five-state study sponsored by the Northeast Recycling Council (NERC):

Recycling & Re-Use Create Jobs: More than **100,000 people** in Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania have recycling and reuse jobs. Those jobs pay wages comparable to other manufacturing jobs in the region.

Recycling & Re-Use Save Energy: Each year, recycling operations in the five states save the amount of energy needed to power almost **two million households**.

Recycling & Re-Use Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions: At the same time, recycling operations in the five states avoid **6.4 million metric tons carbon equivalent of greenhouse gas emissions** – equivalent to taking almost 3 million cars off the road

Recycling is more than bottles, cans, and newspapers: The recycling and reuse industry ranges from long-established sectors like paper and steel making, to new entrepreneurial ventures in composting, plastic and rubber product manufacturing, plus computer remanufacturing and wood reuse.

Manufacturing with recycled materials, not mined materials, employs more workers closer to home: Businesses that use recycled raw materials do so in lieu of “virgin” products that are often mined and manufactured outside of the region. As a result, recycling businesses **create jobs closer to home** and have a **smaller environmental footprint** than companies that rely on raw material extraction.

The Source for the Facts: [*The Recycling Economic Information Study Update*](#). The Study was prepared by [DSM Environmental Services, Inc.](#) and [MidAtlantic Solid Waste Consultants](#) on behalf of the [Northeast Recycling Council, Inc.](#), a coalition of recycling and economic development officials representing ten Northeastern states. Funding for the study was provided by recycling and economic development agencies in Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania.

What New York Says:

“The research clearly shows that the recycling and reuse industry plays an integral role in the region’s economy. In addition to converting what would have been waste into raw materials for manufacturing, the businesses comprising the recycling and reuse sectors are important contributors to the region’s tax base. They are manufacturers who employ skilled workers who earn competitive wages. Plus, these businesses go beyond typical economic returns and offer proven environmental benefits.”

- Brenda Grober, Economic Developer at Empire State Development in Albany, New York

What Pennsylvania Says:

“As the impacts of climate change become increasingly well documented, the industry’s emphasis on using secondary materials in lieu of mined virgin resources -- and the associated reductions in energy use and greenhouse-gas emissions -- will render the environmental advantages of recycling ever more critical to a sustainable materials management policy.”

- Ken Reisinger, Director Bureau of Waste Management
Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection

Where to Find More:

The full REI Update report is available on line at

http://www.nerc.org/documents/recycling_economic_information_study_update_2009.pdf

This study updates a similar report published in 2000 that looked at all ten of the northeast states—Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, & Vermont. That study found that there were more than **200,000 jobs recycling and reuse jobs** in the region.

The Northeast Recycling Council, Inc. is a multi-state non-profit organization committed to environmental sustainability through responsible solid waste management. Its programs emphasize source reduction, reuse, recycling, composting, environmentally preferable purchasing, and decreasing the toxicity of the solid waste stream in the 10-state region comprised of Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

www.nerc.org