



Preserving Resources,
Preventing Waste

The New Jersey WasteWise Bulletin

Newsletter of the New Jersey WasteWise Business Network – Summer 2026
WasteWise ... improving your bottom line and the environment
through waste reduction, recycling, recycled product procurement and sustainability.

Food Waste Reduction Progress Reported

While food waste remains a significant issue throughout the country, the NJ Department of Environmental Protection recently shared some encouraging news regarding food waste reduction in New Jersey. In an April 2026 report, the DEP announced that food waste generation decreased from 1,480,000 tons in 2017 to 1,275,362 tons in 2022. This represents a 14% reduction in food waste generation. This is a positive step towards achieving the state's goal of reducing food waste generation by 50% of 2017 levels by the year 2030, also known as the 50X30 goal.

The reduction in food waste generation from 2017 to 2022 is even more impressive when compared to the difference in solid waste generation for the same time period. From 2017-2022, overall solid waste generation in New Jersey dropped from 9,615,409 tons per year to 9,550,659 which amounts to a reduction of only 0.6%.

"New Jersey's Food Waste Reduction Act 50X30 Report" is available at <https://dep.nj.gov/wp-content/uploads/dshw/fw-reduction-progress-report-4.21.26.pdf>. For additional information on food waste, visit <https://dep.nj.gov/dshw/swpl/fw/>.

Stream Cleanup News

More than 1,000 volunteers participated in the Raritan Headwaters Association's 36th annual stream cleanup. Over 21 tons of trash, including a boat, lawnmower and shed, were removed from 72 sites across Hunterdon, Somerset and Morris counties during the April 18 event. Visit <https://www.raritanheadwaters.org/> for more information about this organization.

Recycle Coach Makes Recycling on Vacation a Day at the Beach

If you are heading to the Jersey Shore for a summertime vacation, make sure to change your address in the Recycle Coach system from your home address to the address of your vacation lodging so that you will have all the essential local recycling information at your fingertips. Summertime visitors generate a lot of recyclable materials while on vacation, so please support the environment and our state's shore communities by recycling while away from home. Thankfully, the Recycle Coach system makes it super easy to get with the program. Learn more about the Recycle Coach system in New Jersey at <https://dep.nj.gov/dshw/rhwm/recycle-coach/>.

DEP Recycling Awards Program Now Open

The DEP is now accepting nominations for its annual recognition program celebrating excellence in recycling. Nominations will be accepted for the following categories: Institution, Business, Retail Merchant, Government, Leadership, Rising Star, Recycling Industry, Outstanding Educator/Educational Program, Volunteer Citizen, Waste Reduction/Resource Management/Sustainability, and Recycled Products Procurement Star. Nominees are evaluated by a panel of judges from DEP and the Association of New Jersey Recyclers. Awards are based on measurable outcomes, commitment to education and outreach, replicability of efforts, innovation, and going beyond regulatory standards. Nominations are due by July 24, 2026. Learn more at recycle.nj.gov.

Did You Know...

- Used corks can be recycled through ReCork, North America's largest natural cork recycling program. The organization uses recycled corks to create innovative eco-friendly products. Learn more at <https://recork.com/us/>.
- Recycled rubber from scrap tires can be incorporated into asphalt to create rubber-asphalt roads that typically last longer than conventional roads. Rubber-asphalt pavements also reduce traffic noise, reduce the amount of spray from wet roadways and result in the recycling of large numbers of tires.
- Office staff should be able to determine where recyclables should be deposited within a few seconds. Use uniform recycling containers throughout your office. Recycling bins with specialized lid openings help staff identify the correct bin as do signs with both text and pictures of recyclable items.
- It is important to keep hoses, cords, clothes and plastic bags out of curbside recycling buckets, bins or carts. These items are not collected in curbside recycling programs as they will jam recycling processing equipment bringing recycling center operations to a halt.
- "Ugly produce" is a term used to describe edible fruits and vegetables that are not typical in size, shape or color. Shoppers are encouraged to ask the manager of their favorite supermarket to open an "ugly produce" section for these off-grade products. In doing so, produce that would normally be discarded can be sold at a discount to shoppers.
- The Reusable Bag Resource Center provides a link tree of opportunities on where to donate reusable bags, how to prepare them for donation, a plastic bag calculator that shows residents the number of single use disposable plastic bags that have been avoided in their town since New Jersey's bag law took effect and much more. Check it out at <https://linktr.ee/litterfreenj>.

Save the Date – The fall 2026 WasteWise Webinar will be held on Thursday, November 5, 2026, 10:00 a.m. to noon. Details will be available in September.

Waste Audits Lead the Way

A waste audit should be the first step taken when developing your business or organization's waste reduction program. It tells you what types of trash you generate and in what quantities, allowing you to target specific materials and operating practices for waste reduction. Once you are better acquainted with the composition of the waste your business or organization generates, it is easier to identify those materials that could be recycled and items that could be "used less" or "used again." For a list of waste audit resources, visit <https://dep.nj.gov/sustainability/outreach-and-education/wastewise/>.

Focus on Recyclable Materials Market Prices

Like other commodity markets, recycling markets - and the recyclable commodity prices paid by these markets - are cyclical and impacted by many global factors. The following are the average recyclable commodity price values for May 2026

PET Plastic	\$20.00/ton
HDPE Natural Plastic	\$1,680.00/ton
HDPE Colored Plastic	\$273.00/ton
Plastics #1-7	\$64.00/ton
Tin	\$175.00/long ton
Aluminum	\$2,190.00/ton
Paper (domestic)	\$60.00/ton
Paper (export)	\$54.00/ton
OCC* (domestic)	\$100.00/ton
OCC* (export)	\$110.00/ton
Office Paper	\$200.00/ton
Aseptic/Cartons**	\$25.00/ton
*OCC = Old Corrugated Cardboard	**Examples are soup and juice boxes

Source - Burlington County Recycling Office



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Business Network

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<http://www.nj.gov/dep/dshw/recycling/wastewise/brbn03.htm>