



Preserving Resources,  
Preventing Waste

# The New Jersey WasteWise Bulletin

Newsletter of the New Jersey WasteWise Business Network – Spring 2020  
WasteWise ... improving your bottom line and the environment  
through waste reduction, recycling and recycled product procurement.

## 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Earth Day and NJDEP

On April 22, 1970, Americans across the country took part in the first Earth Day by participating in protests, rallies and other events designed to force environmental protection onto the national political agenda. It is estimated that 20 million Americans participated in the first Earth Day. The first Earth Day is credited with launching the modern environmental movement and led to the passage of numerous laws aimed at curbing air and water pollution. Earth Day has continued to grow over the years and is now recognized as the planet's largest civic event featuring litter cleanup programs, recycling initiatives, environmental education activities and more. Earth Day is now celebrated in almost 200 countries.

In New Jersey, the first Earth Day in 1970 has added significance since it also marks the day when the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection was first established. The new department was tasked with protecting environmental quality and public health and was led by Richard J. Sullivan, its first Commissioner. Today, the DEP is responsible for implementing and overseeing numerous environmental laws and is known for its many innovative environmental programs and initiatives.

### ***Recycling and Greenhouse Gas Emissions:***

► *By using ferrous scrap rather than virgin materials in the production of iron and steel, carbon dioxide emissions are reduced by 58 percent. (Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries)*

► *Recycling one ton of paper will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by one metric ton of carbon equivalent. (United States Environmental Protection Agency)*

## WasteWise Suggestions for these Difficult Times

Avoid extra trips to the supermarket, save money and reduce food waste by...

...being smart about date labels on food containers. Manufacturers provide dating to help consumers and retailers decide when food is of best quality. Except for infant formula, dates are not an indicator of the product's safety. So, food that is past the "sell by date" is often edible.

...keeping track of what and how much you throw away after each meal. Keeping track of your food waste can help pinpoint why food waste is created in your household and help prevent it in the future.

...by storing fruits and vegetables for maximum freshness; they'll taste better and last longer, helping you to eat more of them. Search online for storage tips.

Looking for something productive to do with your extra time at home?

> Clean out your basement, garage, attic or shed and set aside unwanted, but still usable items that can be donated to charitable organizations in the future.

> Become a recycling champion in your home by learning more about your local recycling program. Visit your county and municipal recycling website or RecycleCoach for details about your recycling program.

> Learn how to set up a backyard composting pile! Making compost from yard and food waste keeps these materials out of landfills where they take up space and release methane, a potent greenhouse gas.

For more information, visit [recycle.nj.gov](http://recycle.nj.gov).

## Did You Know...

- RecycleHealth, a nonprofit organization working out of Tufts University School of Medicine, collects and refurbishes unwanted wearable fitness trainer devices – Fitbits, Apple Watches and other health-tracking gadgets - and donates them to organizations working with low-income, vulnerable populations for use in nutrition and exercise programs. For more information, visit <https://www.recyclehealth.com/>.
- Nevasca, a winter boot made with recycled materials, is now available from the Frank And Oak Company. The toecaps and mudguards of the boots are made using discarded coffee husks combined with recycled rubber, while recycled wool felt is used to line the boots. The Nevaca boot marks the kickoff of the company's eco-conscious line of footwear.
- China imported 39 percent less recyclable paper from global suppliers in 2019 than it did in 2018.
- IKEA recently announced that it will be using a mushroom-based renewable alternative packaging material in place of plastic packaging.
- The City of Berkeley, CA's disposable-free dining ordinance requires all takeout food ware, including utensils, to be compostable. All dine-in food ware must be reusable by mid-2020. These regulations apply to all eateries, including fast-food chains. A 25-cent charge for disposable cups (plastic or paper) also went into effect in January 2020 with the goal of convincing customers to bring their own reusable cup from home.
- Lithuania's deposit-refund system for plastic, aluminum and glass food and beverage containers has enabled the country to reach a 92% recycling rate for all bottles and cans in just two years.
- Cigarette butts are the most frequently littered item in the United States. Consider distributing portable and pocket ashtrays to staff to reduce litter.
- Empire Recycled Fiber, LLC announced its plan to open a new pulp mill in Fairless Hills, PA that will produce fiber pulp from recycled mixed wastepaper and old corrugated containers. The mill is scheduled to open in the fall of 2021.

## Law Calls for Creation of Recycling Market Development Council

To better address the market challenges facing recycling programs, Governor Phil Murphy signed legislation in January that calls for the establishment of a Recycling Market Development Council, which will analyze the market for recycling and consider strategies to increase the use of recyclable materials in the manufacture of new products. The council will also recommend best management practices to reduce contamination of the recycling stream and investigate the feasibility of providing preferences for products with recycled content. In addition, the council will consider ways to stimulate the use of recycled content products in public projects.

The Recycling Market Development Council will also provide recommendations on changes needed to State laws or rules to stimulate the manufacture of recycled content products. The council will report on its findings within 18 months of the effective date of the law.

## Office Recycling Tip:

► Establish a consistent recycling and trash bin set-up, as well as collection program, in all offices and common areas to decrease confusion for employees and janitorial staff. This will improve participation and the quality of recyclables collected.

## Quote of the Day

"The good thing about science is that it's true whether or not you believe in it." – Neil deGrasse Tyson, Astrophysicist



### **New Jersey WasteWise**

#### **Business Network**

Steven Rinaldi, Chair  
DEP, Bureau of Sustainability  
[Steven.Rinaldi@dep.nj.gov](mailto:Steven.Rinaldi@dep.nj.gov)  
<http://www.nj.gov/dep/dshw/recycling/wastewise/brbn03.htm>  
[www.epa.gov/wastewise](http://www.epa.gov/wastewise)