



## Recycling in Pennsylvania 1995-2002

---

Pennsylvania's recycling program demonstrates conclusively that individuals can take positive actions to influence our environment. It is the premiere example of a sustainable industry that contributes more than \$21 billion annually to Pennsylvania's economy. This fact sheet shares with you some of our accomplishments in the last seven years – 1995 to 2002 – and what the future holds for Pennsylvania's nationally recognized recycling program.

1995

---

Act 101, the Municipal Waste Planning, Recycling and Waste Reduction Act, has been a tremendous success! All 67 counties in Pennsylvania have developed municipal waste management plans. In 1989 - the year after Act 101 was passed - the statewide recycling rate was less than two percent. But in 1995 the recycling rate had risen to 17.9 percent by collecting materials specifically mentioned in Act 101. Over 1.7 million tons of wastes were diverted from disposal in 1995 and over 9 million Pennsylvanians participated in curbside and drop-off recycling programs in 1,345 communities. Eighty-five Pennsylvania companies manufactured products with recycled content and state government itself contracted for more than \$84 million in products containing recycled materials.

**In 1995, 885 sites in 59 Pennsylvania counties are registered to collect used motor oil for recycling!**

1996

---

Home-by-home, business-by-business, Pennsylvanians worked to make our recycling program an overwhelming success. Because of their actions, we reached our 1996 goal of recycling 25 percent of our waste, up from less than two percent when the program started in 1988.

In fact, in 1996 we recycled 25.9 percent and exceeded our recycling goal! With more than nine million citizens participating in curbside and drop-off recycling programs in 1,445 communities across the Commonwealth, Pennsylvania has the largest recycling program in the nation.

**In 1996, Pennsylvanians recycled over 2.4 million tons of materials and set a new state recycling goal of 35 percent by 2003!**

1997

---

In 1997, the efforts of residents and businesses in Pennsylvania to protect the environment diverted more than 26 percent of Pennsylvania's municipal waste from landfills and

conserved our natural resources. Recycling programs in 1,472 Pennsylvania communities served nearly 76 percent of Pennsylvania's population.

A total of 760 Act 101 recycling grants were awarded to counties and municipalities in FY 1997-98 totaling \$22.7 million. Pennsylvanians recycled over 2.4 million tons of materials in 1997, or 26.2 percent of all waste generated.

**In 1997, state government eliminated the use of 14 million sheets of paper a year by converting to electronic processing!**

1998

---

In 1998, 3.4 million tons of Pennsylvania waste were diverted from landfills and recycled and Pennsylvania's recycling rate rose to 32.6 percent! Nearly 130 Pennsylvania manufacturers bought our processed materials, used them to make new products, and sold them in a green marketplace. In 10 years, the \$2-per-ton recycling fee on waste has generated \$354.5 million to fund local recycling and waste management programs, grants for recycling research and demonstration projects, low-interest loans for start-up recycling companies, training for waste management program managers, and recycling education for all Pennsylvania residents.

**Pennsylvanians recycled 845,863 more tons of materials in 1998 than we did in 1997!**

1999

---

In 1999, there were more than 3,200 recycling and reuse businesses in the Commonwealth employing more than 81,000 people with an annual payroll of nearly \$2.9 billion! Annual receipts for these industries exceeded \$18 billion. Curbside and drop-off recycling was a way of life for 10 million Pennsylvanians – making Pennsylvania's recycling program a national leader, internationally recognized and respected.

Most Pennsylvania recycling programs – 92 percent – collect more materials than those required by law, and 229 programs collect eight or more materials for recycling. In 1999, we

## What's Ahead for Pennsylvania Recycling

diverted 3.8 million tons – 32.6 percent – from disposal and DEP handed out 9,000 free composting bins. A new focus -- “green” building -- contributed to a 951 percent increase in construction/demolition waste recycling.

**In 1999, DEP used \$38 million generated from the \$2-per-ton recycling fee to award 1,035 grants to counties and municipalities for recycling and other waste management programs!**

2000

By recycling, Pennsylvanians diverted 3.9 million tons of recyclable materials from disposal facilities this year. And we edged closer to our 35 percent recycling goal with a 2000 state recycling rate of 32.7 percent! In this fiscal year, DEP awarded 1,036 grants totaling \$53.6 million to bolster local recycling and other waste management programs – and now, more than 10 million Pennsylvania residents, or 85 percent of our population, have convenient access to recycling. DEP also encouraged at-home recycling by distributing 25,000 free composting bins this year as county conservation districts offered free workshops on backyard composting.

**Act 101 required only 415 Pennsylvania municipalities to recycle in 2000, but 1,580 of our municipalities had recycling programs!**

2001

We did it, Pennsylvania! And one year ahead of schedule! Recycling data indicate that Pennsylvanians recycled nearly four million tons of materials and our recycling rate climbed to 36.1 percent, beating our goal of 35 percent by 2003! We did not stop there. Because recycling and education go hand in hand, DEP and the Department of Education supplied more than 100,000 recycling bins free of charge to 319 Pennsylvania public schools, colleges and universities. Also in 2001, 35,384 tons of tires from waste tire piles across the Commonwealth were recycled and Philadelphia recycled 835,718 tons of construction and demolition waste and asphalt. Pennsylvania's recycling program is thriving and we pledge to do even better in years to come.

**Pennsylvania achieves and exceeds its 35 percent recycling goal!**

**Pay-As-You-Throw in Pennsylvania:** The Pennsylvania Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) programs charge residents for waste removal services based on the quantity of material discarded. Some may have a set rate per bag, while others use a combination of a fixed subscription fee plus a variable fee based on service.

**Financial Assistance:** Today, each Pennsylvanian only spends on average \$1.60 on recycling per year to reap the numerous benefits that are achieved through Pennsylvania's recycling programs. DEP returns an average of \$1.14 to each person through our recycling implementation grant programs as a return on their recycling investment.

**Electronics Recycling (eCycling):** Electronic equipment can be recycled for recovery of metals, plastics, and glass. In 2000, Pennsylvania counties reported recycling of 1,146 tons of consumer electronics. During 2002, there are at least four countywide electronics recycling events being held, and Lancaster County has established a permanent collection site.

**Composting:** DEP is expanding its composting program to encourage Pennsylvanians to reduce yard waste by mulching with leaves, chipping woody materials to use as an ornamental mulch or to control weeds, and recycling yard waste and vegetable scraps by composting to produce a valuable soil conditioner.

**Oil Recycling:** Used oil can be re-refined into lubricating oil that is equal in quality to lubricating oil made from crude oil. Currently, 815 sites in 61 counties in Pennsylvania accept used oil. DEP is looking for more site sponsors, particularly in the six counties that still lack sites, and considering ways to increase the number of used oil drop-off sites in rural and waterfront areas to collect oil generated on farms and around marinas.

**Recycling Market Development:** In July 2000, DEP heightened its emphasis on recycling market development. The *Recycled Products Directory* lists more than 4,500 recycled products covering more than 950 recycled product classifications. DEP is currently conducting waste and recyclables composition studies to help with future recycling collection and market development efforts.

### Recycling is Big Business in Pennsylvania

|   |                           |                              |                       |
|---|---------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Recycling and Reuse Establishments</b> | <b>Over 3,200</b>         | <b>Annual Sales Receipts</b> | <b>\$18.4 Billion</b> |
| <b>Recycling and Reuse Employment</b>     | <b>Over 81,000 People</b> | <b>Annual Payroll</b>        | <b>\$2.9 Billion</b>  |

This fact sheet and related environmental information are available electronically via Internet. For more information, visit us through the PA PowerPort at <http://www.state.pa.us> or visit DEP directly at <http://www.dep.state.pa.us> (directLINK “recycling”).



[www.GreenWorks.tv](http://www.GreenWorks.tv) - A web space dedicated to helping you learn how to protect and improve the environment. The site features the largest collection of environmental videos available on the Internet and is produced by the nonprofit Environmental Fund for Pennsylvania, with financial support from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, 877-PA-GREEN.

