



## Resources and Energy

One of the key benefits of recycling is the amount of natural resources and energy saved by reducing the need for virgin material for new products. If the resources are able to be recycled and reused, why would we spend extra time, money, energy, and labor to extract and process new resources? Our continuous need for materials is a strain on our wallets and environment because we are constantly paying for unnecessary resources and their externalities. Recycling is not always about direct personal gain, but about doing something for the health of the community and for the future of environmental stability. Here are some of the savings gained by proper recycling of paper, aluminum, plastics, glass, and cardboard.

### *Aluminum:*

- **95% less energy** is used to make products from recycled aluminum than with new aluminum ore
- Recycling one ton of aluminum saves **21 barrels of oil**
- One recycled soda can saves enough energy to power a television for **3 hours**
- Aluminum does not lose value during the recycling process, meaning it can be recycled infinitely

### Did you know...?

The 89 million tons of material recycled and composted in 2014 eliminated 181 million metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions – equivalent to removing annual emissions from 38 million passenger vehicles.

### *Plastic:*

- The national demand for plastic bottles uses enough oil to fuel **5.7 million cars** for one year
- **76% less energy** is required to make products with recycled plastic than with new material
- A plastic shopping bag is only used for an average of **12 minutes**
- Recycling one ton of plastic saves **30 cubic yards** of landfill space
- One recycled plastic bottle saves enough energy to power a **60-watt light bulb for 3 hours**
- Only **23% of plastic bottles** are recycled each year





*Glass:*

- Recycling one ton of glass **saves 7.5 lbs. of air pollutants** from entering the atmosphere
- One recycled glass bottle saves enough energy to power a computer for **25 minutes**
- Recycling a metric ton of glass **saves 315 kg of carbon dioxide** from entering the atmosphere

*Paper:*

- Recycling one ton of paper **saves 17 trees**
- **70% less energy** is needed to make products from recycled paper than with new materials
- **544,000 trees would be saved** if every household in the United States replaced one roll of virgin fiber paper towels with 100% recycled fiber
- One ton of recycled paper saves the equivalent of **322 gallons of gasoline**

More information:

<https://www.epa.gov/recycle/recycling-basics>

