

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Economic Impact of America's Recycled Materials Industry

The recycled materials industry is the backbone of U.S. manufacturing. Recycling delivers jobs, strengthens supply chains, and provides the reliable renewable materials manufacturers depend on to make everything from consumer products to EVs to essential infrastructure.



\$184 Billion
in Annual Economic Activity



\$21 Billion
in Annual Tax Revenue



603,000 Jobs
Supported Nationwide



50 States
with Active Operations



A Critical Link in the Manufacturing Supply Chain

The industry supplies high-quality raw materials, including metals, paper, plastics, electronics, and more that strengthen American manufacturing competitiveness.

70% of all U.S. produced steel is made from recycled steel

MORE THAN 75% of U.S. paper mills depend on recycled paper



Recycled Materials Association
Sustainable. Resilient. Essential.

Good-Paying Jobs in Every State

The industry provides compensation exceeding \$100,000, significantly above the national median. These are stable, well-paying jobs at recycling facilities, processors, brokers, and specialized operations in communities across all 50 states.



174,736

Direct Industry Jobs



205,734

Supplier Jobs



222,484

Community Spending Jobs



603,000

Total Jobs Supported

+2

For every one job in recycling, more than two additional jobs are supported across the economy.

\$71B

in direct economic activity at recycling businesses

\$113B

in indirect economic activity through suppliers and community spending

A \$184 Billion Economic Powerhouse

The recycled materials industry is thriving and innovating. The industry's economic footprint equals almost 1% of the entire U.S. economy.

The industry's economic impact is comparable to the total economic output of a mid-sized U.S. state.



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A Major U.S. Export Industry

Recycled materials collected and processed in the U.S. are sold to manufacturers both domestically and abroad who turn them into new products. International demand drives nearly one-third of the industry's economic activity.

Recycled materials rank among the nation's largest commodity exports—comparable to exports such as grain, cotton, timber, and petroleum.



U.S. recyclers produce more than domestic manufacturers need, making the surplus available to international buyers and supporting American businesses.



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Funding Communities Across America

The recycled materials industry sends nearly \$21 billion a year to federal, state, and local governments—funding the schools, roads, public safety, and essential services that residents in every state depend on.



\$21 Billion
in Annual Tax Revenue



\$13 Billion
Federal Taxes

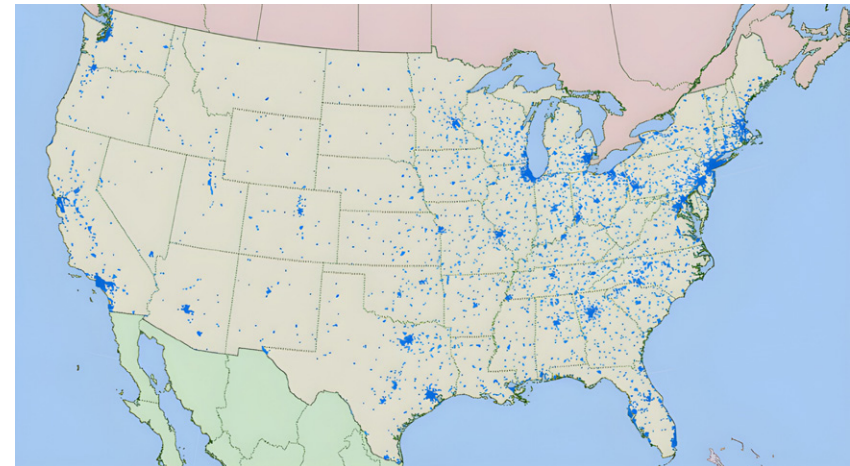


\$8 Billion
State and Local Taxes

Economic Impact in Every State

The recycled materials industry supports jobs and economic activity in every state—from large industrial regions to small rural communities.

In each state, the direct contribution of recycling businesses is complemented by the companies that supply those businesses and the broader communities where recycling workers live and spend.



Explore economic impact data for your state and congressional district:
recycledmaterials.org/our-impact