Recycled Materials Association

Sustainable. Resilient. Essential.

GLOBAL MARKET ACCESS

Essential for U.S. Recycled Materials Industry Competitiveness

The Recycled Materials Association (ReMA) represents more than 1,700 companies that play a vital role in supplying high-quality recycled materials to manufacturers at home and abroad. Recycled materials meet a significant percentage of manufacturers' raw material input needs, making this industry a critical component of the manufacturing supply chain. From everyday goods and critical infrastructure and across the automotive, construction, defense, and packaging industries, recycled materials are essential to the global manufacturing supply chain and the nation's overall economic resilience. It's impossible to go a day—or even an hour—without using a product made in part with recycled materials.

WHY IT MATTERS

The Importance of Market Access

Reliable access to global markets is crucial because:

- **Robust market access supports American prosperity**. Each year, around 30 percent of materials recycled in the U.S. are exported, providing 50,000 American jobs and contributing billions of dollars to the U.S. economy. Without reliable access to international markets, the recycled materials industry would face decreased investments in U.S. operations, workforces, and local communities.
- **Robust market access enhances U.S. competitiveness.** The U.S. is the world's largest exporter of high-quality recycled materials. While American manufacturers rely on recycled materials domestically, the industry is also a crucial first link in the global manufacturing supply chain. The industry consistently generates more recycled material than can be consumed domestically, making access to export markets essential to sustain operations and support jobs across the supply chain.
- **Robust market access reduces the U.S. trade deficit.** Recycled materials are among the nation's largest commodity exports by volume, alongside grain, corn, cotton, timber, and petroleum. In 2024 alone, the U.S. exported 32 million metric tons of recycled materials valued at $28 billion, according to the U.S. Census Bureau and U.S. International Trade Commission.

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The Industry Relies on Sound Trade Policies

New trade restrictions would:

- **Make the industry less competitive and lower the demand for recycled materials.** Broad trade measures, such as import tariffs and export controls, would disrupt markets both domestically and internationally and reduce demand for recycled materials. Additionally, any potential retaliatory actions by other countries would threaten the recycled materials industry.
- **Increase production costs on U.S. companies.** Trade restrictions increase costs for essential equipment, components, and recycled materials needed throughout the manufacturing supply chain. These measures affect the competitiveness of the recycled materials and manufacturing industries, particularly when sourcing from trading partners such as Canada, Mexico, and the European Union.
- **Disrupt market dynamics and put supply chains at risk.** Many industries that consume recycled materials advocate for export restrictions on recycled commodities, which unfairly manipulate market dynamics for these valuable renewable resources. Some governments have sought to enact export restrictions claiming environmental benefits, but these policies unintentionally reduce demand for recycled materials.

Key Takeaways for Policymakers

The recycled materials industry is sustainable, resilient, and essential.

To safeguard American competitiveness, jobs for U.S. workers, and domestic manufacturing supply chains, it is critical for the recycled materials industry to maintain access to global markets through trade policies that enhance U.S. influence worldwide. We're committed to working with policymakers to develop policies that:

- **Maintain global market access for recycled materials** by limiting trade restrictions which could invite retaliation by other countries;
- **Support domestic manufacturing efforts** by excluding critical equipment, components, and machinery needed by the industry from tariffs; and
- **Invest in U.S. workers and communities** by ensuring the recycled materials industry remain competitive globally.

Trade restrictive measures, including tariffs and export controls, weaken the U.S. recycled materials industry and the domestic manufacturing base that relies on high-quality recycled materials to make new products.

Learn more at: **recycledmaterials.org**