

North Carolina Recycling Facts

When one considers that the people of North Carolina recycles 68 pounds of trash per second, you might think that is impressive. Yet the thought is diminished when one learns that we are also putting 679 pounds of trash per second into our landfills. This means that we actually only recycle less than 10% of our trash. However, it might be a comfort to learn that 57% of the daily newspapers do get recycled. And corrugate card board is recycled at a rate of about 50%.

On a national level steel has reached a 64% recycling level. Mostly due to the value of scrap steel which is at an all time high. Yet, specifically in North Carolina, only 20% of steel cans make it to a recycling center. That means that 80% of every can ends up in a landfill.

Despite a statewide ban on disposal of aluminum cans, only half of them are recycled. That amounts to a staggering 20 million dollars worth of aluminum cans finding their way to our landfills every year. How many hungry children could be fed with that?

The State of North Carolina has picked up more than a pound of road side litter per person in 2003. Considering the fact that 8.4 million people live in the state, the Department of Transportation realizes a serious budget just for litter clean- up. And speaking of budgets, if only one third of North Carolina residents sent junk reduction cards to the Mail Preference Association, our government would save almost 1.3 million dollars annually.

Currently only 1% of our trash stream is being incinerated, 6% is being composted, and a meager 26% (over all) is being recycled. The amount of trash that North Carolinians send to our landfills has increased from 6.8 million tons in 1991 to over 10.23 tons in 2003. Considering the growth rate of our state, we will probably discard well over 15 millions tons this year.