

Mass Recycles Paper Campaign Op-ed

Look what we can save by recycling paper

Each year in Massachusetts we throw away 1.5 million tons of paper – enough to fill Fenway Park with a mound 250 yards tall, as high as the Prudential Center.

Know how much this costs us -- more than \$100 million in disposal fees. We might as well be shredding our money!

Not only do we waste money by throwing away paper, but we squander the opportunity to make millions of dollars by recycling and selling it instead. Paper mills around the world are paying hefty prices for recycled paper. It's a valuable commodity.

Recycling paper provides significant environmental benefits. Want to reduce global warming? Recycle! It's a small, easy step that makes a big difference.

That's why MassRecycle, a broad-based coalition with a 20-year history of advocating for and educating the public and policy makers about recycling, has launched a statewide campaign to recycle more paper.

Mass Recycles Paper! is a public/private partnership of MassRecycle, MassDEP, the US Environmental Protection Agency – New England, state and local officials, business leaders and concerned citizens.

Our city/town of (insert name) is pleased to announce that we have joined with municipalities all across the state in pledging to do all that we can to recycle more paper.

Why recycle more paper? What difference could it possibly make? A *huge* difference to our environment and economy, and that's why we are joining MassRecycle in calling on our residents to recycle more paper.

We face incredible costs to our city (town) budget and the environment when we throw away paper. We wouldn't throw dollar bills in the trash, but that's what we're doing when we throw away paper.

We pay (\$70 – insert your per ton tip fee) for each ton of trash that we incinerate. (or send to the landfill.) With rising costs stretching our budgets so thin, how about using tax dollars for more productive uses?

Paper is a valuable commodity. Paper mills in New England and around the world are eager to buy used paper – all kinds of paper -- and give it new life. Paper mills are currently paying as much for paper as it costs to throw it away.

The Newark Group operates paper mills in Haverhill and Fitchburg that make game boxes, cereal boxes, pizza boxes and book covers out of recycled paper. The plant in Haverhill is more than 105 years old and part of New England's illustrious paper mill history.

Jobs created by the recycling industry -- from the collectors and processors to manufacturers like these paper mills -- add significantly to the Massachusetts economy.

According to MassDEP, nearly 1,500 recycling businesses in the Commonwealth employ a total of 19,500 people and have a combined annual payroll of \$557 million.

Recycling reduces greenhouse gas emissions and saves energy. Recycling in Massachusetts saved over 85 million BTUs of energy in 2004. This is equal to 32 percent of all energy used by industry in Massachusetts or 700 million gallons of gasoline.

We all have heard dire predictions on the impact of global warming. Many of the best minds are working on creating new technologies and policy makers are pushing strong agendas to significantly reduce greenhouse gases by the year 2050.

But we don't have to wait 40 to 50 years to make a difference on global warming. Each individual can do his or her part by making a commitment to recycle all paper at home and at work.

You can start by recycling this newspaper, but it isn't just newspapers that are recyclable.

You can recycle magazines, catalogs, mail (window envelopes, too), shredded paper, phonebooks, flattened cardboard, pasta and cereal boxes, even spiral-bound, paper clipped and stapled reports.

Every major movement of change begins with individuals. Each one of us can make a difference and help save the earth by pledging to recycle all of our clean waste paper.

By recycling even just two bags of paper each week, in one year's time you will save the equivalent of nine trees, 120 gallons of fuel and prevent the production of one and a half tons of carbon dioxide.

(Name) is the (Title) for the City/Town of (name). You may contact him/her by phone (add phone number) or email (add email address). For more information about recycling paper, visit www.MassRecyclesPaper.org.