

RECYCLING FAQs



- **Why is recycling important?**

Each year, more than \$435 million in recyclable material goes to landfills around the state. That material – plastics, metals, glass, paper, and more – could be repurposed to save landfill space, help the environment, and create business opportunities

- **Is this about the Bottle Law?**

No. This plan is about all the residential recyclable materials that are not monetized like refundable bottles and cans.

- **Michigan's has a 10-cent refund on most bottles and cans. That means we recycle, right?**

The bottle deposit program was started in 1976 as an effort to reduce litter. While the program has been iconic as a litter-reducing effort, Michigan actually has very low participation in residential recycling.

- **What is Michigan's recycling rate?**

The residential recycling rate for Michigan is estimated around 15 percent. That means we trail the other Great Lakes States and most of the nation. However, one of the first priorities of the statewide recycling initiative will be to get stronger data about recycling in Michigan counties, cities and towns. The effort will focus on three pieces: amounts of material recycled, access to programs, and local participation in those programs.

- **Why is Michigan's recycling rate so low?**

It appears to be a combination of lack of public awareness, lack of convenient access to recycling, and a historic lack of leadership to solve the problem. The Snyder Administration has provided leadership by drawing 45 top stakeholders together to address the problem, creating an appointed advisory board of those leading stakeholders to guide the state recycling plan, and putting resources behind the effort to increase public awareness and access to recycling opportunities.

- **I've heard manufacturers boasting about their high recycling rates. How does this effort affect them?**

This plan addresses residential recycling, focusing on household-level waste – making more bins available in curbside programs and increasing access to community recycling centers. Michigan's manufacturing sector, as well as most business sectors, have a great recycling story to tell. Most businesses have recognized the social and financial incentives to minimizing energy use and maximizing their resource use.

- **Is \$1 million enough to make a difference?**

The funding will support development of a program to grow recycling in Michigan, including technical support for local community programs and a statewide public information campaign. These are first steps in a sustained effort.

FAST FACTS: Michigan by the numbers

- **\$435 million:** The market value of all the recyclable metal, glass and plastic sent from Michigan households to Michigan landfills every year. (Michigan Recycling Coalition Report)
- **15%:** Michigan's estimated recycling rate. (estimate based on data from materials recovering facilities in 2012, courtesy Columbia University)
- **45:** Number of stakeholders involved in the formation of Michigan's recycling plan. The group included recyclers, grocers, bottlers, landfill operators, and more.
- **25:** Number of Michigan's 83 counties where residents presently have convenient access to recycling*
- **More than 90%:** the return rate for refundable bottles and cans in Michigan.
- **Less than 2%:** Returnable bottles and cans as part of the broader waste stream.



* "Convenient access" defined as

1. Each resident living in a residence of four households or less must have access to recycling through ordinance, public/private partnerships, private-hauler contracting, or a publicly managed program.
2. Each community with 10,000 or more people must provide each resident access to curbside recycling.
3. In a community without curbside recycling, there must be at least one drop-off location per 10,000 people.