



Let's SOAR!

Stop Pollution
Obey Laws
Always Improve
Reduce Waste

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AMERICA RECYCLES DAY IS NOVEMBER 15!

LISA COPELAND

ONE DAY TO EDUCATE, ONE DAY TO MOTIVATE & ONE DAY TO MAKE RECYCLING BIGGER & BETTER

America Recycles Day is celebrated nationally every November 15th, but did you know this national celebration was started in the great state of Texas? Yes, the Lone Star State spearheaded this annual event. It originally started as Texas Recycles Day, in 1994, and was conceptualized by two employees of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), Valerie Davis and Kevin Tuerff. Their idea was to promote and boost recycling throughout the state during a 6 week campaign. They chose November 15th as the date because it occurs approximately a half year after Earth Day, is after Election Day, and before the busy holidays. When Davis and Tuerff left their positions at TCEQ, they started an Austin-based public relations and advertising agency focused on environmental issues, and they proposed expanding Texas Recycles Day to America Recycles Day. When they presented their idea to the national Recycling Coalition's Congress, it was embraced immediately.

The national launch of America Recycles Day occurred on November 15th, 1997. Over 40 states participated, and the event has continued to grow. In 2017, more than 73,800 people pledged to recycle, and over 1.5 million people attended America Recycles Day events across the U.S. So far, in 2019, more than 79,400 people have already pledged to recycle. As we continue to raise the nation's consciousness on recycling, we need to raise the recycling rate, through higher citizen participation rates and by lowering the amount of contamination in our recyclables. We must not only recycle more, as a nation, but also make the extra effort to recycle properly.

Plastic Recycling & China - What do we do now?

SARAH OTTO & LISA COPELAND

The export of recyclable materials has been a major component of the U.S. recycling industry for decades, and over 45% of U.S. recyclable commodities were routinely shipped to China. However, in 2017, China began enforcing strict new limits and contamination standards on imported recyclable materials. As a result of this policy, China is no longer accepting shipments mixed with trash, the wrong type of recyclables, or low-quality recyclables.

China's new standards have had the effect of a ban on the import of recycled plastics from other countries. So what is happening to our recyclables?

Some are being transported to other countries, but the volume of waste we are producing exceeds the rest of the world's capabilities to take them, which means that more and more of what is normally recyclable material is heading straight to a landfill or incinerator. This also means that less recycled material is available for new production and virgin materials are being mined and manufactured to make up the demand.

New technologies and new processes are being developed to address the situation, but what do we do in the meantime?

Two things:

- 1) We can reduce the amount of waste we make; and
- 2) We can reduce the amount of contamination in our recycle bins.



There are many things we can do to reduce the amount of waste we produce every day, here are just a few:

- Be aware how much and what type of packaging a products uses.
 - Purchase in bulk when possible.
 - Are they individually wrapped? Do they need to be?
 - Reuse packaging when possible (when shipping, moving, or for crafts)
- Package leftovers in reusable containers – skip the plastic baggies wherever feasible.
- Carry a reusable water bottle.
- Bring reusable cloth or canvas grocery and produce bags with you to the store.
- When ordering drinks, refuse a straw.
- Use reusable dishes and cutlery for picnics and parties.
- Use recycled cardboard, craft paper, or compostable cornstarch peanuts for packaging purposes.
- Use cloth diapers.
- Buy used or wooden toys.
- Compost as much of your waste as possible to reduce the use of plastic trash bags.
- Take good care of your things, and if something does break, try to fix it before throwing it out and replacing it.
- Opt out of receiving some of that junk mail at OptOutPrescreen.com and DMAchoice.org

Food, non-recyclable plastic, or items in the incorrect recycling stream move through the recycling system, contaminating or damaging other perfectly good recyclable materials, with the result that an entire shipment, may end up in a landfill, instead of being recycled.

- Check your waste removal service's website to see what recyclable items are accepted.
- Empty, rinse, and dry all containers before dropping them into a recycle bin.

EAT, DRINK, AND BE GREEN

SARAH OTTO



Every year on Thanksgiving we remember to give thanks for what we have, for the people around us, and for the food in front of us. Let us also be thankful for the beautiful world around us. Here are some ways in which we can show our thanks for the world we live in.

- Use reusable dinnerware, cups and napkins
- Purchase local foods when possible
- Avoid food waste
 - Plan your dinner carefully to avoid making too much
 - Store leftovers properly, within two hours of cooking
 - Use within three to four days or freeze them
 - Use the leftover turkey and ham bones for stocks or soups
 - Try composting any leftover breads, potatoes, fruits, veggies, desserts, and coffees!
- Serve filtered tap water in lieu of bottled water
- Do not rinse Fats, Oils, and Grease down the drain, while they are liquid after cooking your meals, they solidify once cool, causing major backups and sanitary sewer overflows.
 - Scrape grease solids directly into a lined trash can
 - Pour cooled liquid grease into a sealable container
 - Wipe remaining grease and debris with a paper towel

