

Lavergne in Haiti: A great leap forward for plastics recycling

As the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, Haiti has limited infrastructure or access to clean water. The population relies mostly on water from plastic bottles. The Caribbean nation struggles with empty bottles littering the countryside and the environmental risk that those plastics may be headed for the ocean.



Courtesy of [HP inc](#)

Environmental, Economic and Social Benefits

Lavergne's Haiti project helps divert those ocean-bound plastics and prepares them for re-use as high-end technology parts. The project also creates economic and educational opportunities throughout Haiti's local communities.

Launched in 2016, the project was designed to:

- Improve the working conditions of Haitians collecting bottles
- Create new economic and educational opportunities in local communities
- Provide good jobs and skills training for those working in the landfill

"Our Haiti project has economic, environmental and social benefits," said Jean-Luc Lavergne, CEO. "We're diverting plastics from the ocean, creating new jobs, and helping build communities. When you're helping the environment, economy and people, you know you've hit on something great."

Innovative Transformation

The recycling process follows a number of important steps.

Collection — The collection process begins by recovering plastic bottles from canals, roadsides and ocean shores. It's a new opportunity for people in Haiti's local communities — gathering and collecting plastic containers and bottles then selling them to the collection centers.

Separation — Collected bottles are separated at the collection centers throughout the country equipped with scales and proper equipment. The separating work is done manually, a task that provides a large number of jobs for local residents.

Shredding — Once sorted and separated, the plastic waste is transported to a central Lavergne Haiti factory where it is shredded into small flakes.

Cleaning — The material is cleaned through an extensive washing, rinsing and drying process. The washline allows Lavergne to divert three types of plastics from the ocean: PET, HDPE and PP.

Upcycling and Compounding — Clean flakes are shipped to Lavergne facilities in North America. Lavergne takes the flakes and incorporates additives — our company's secret recipe — to blend, compound, extrude and cut the plastics into pellets.

Those pellets will soon go to product manufacturers who use them in high-end, technically demanding applications as parts in appliances, automobiles or electronics.

Lavergne engineer Donald Vigneault explained: "Every bit of Lavergne's process — from the machinery to the science and the final product — is unique to our company. We're a special organization designed to meet the industry's customized needs."

Next Steps for Lavergne and Ocean-Bound Plastics

Our Haiti project has moved the needle on diverting ocean-bound plastics.

The good news is that we're just getting started.

With Lavergne leading the way, these cutting-edge recycling processes have enormous potential to transform how the industry handles post-consumer plastics, how companies create and source high-end parts, and how consumers understand recycled products.

We believe the Earth has already created enough plastic to serve everyone's future needs. Keep watching Lavergne for updates on our latest work towards making that vision a reality.