

The Positive Impacts of Recycling Plastic

Think about e-waste such as your old computer mouse, keyboard or monitor. Or consumer plastics such as empty drink bottles or food packaging.

When you direct those items to recycling, you're helping preserve our environment, creating jobs in local communities, while [transforming the way people think about our future](#).

So the next time the conversation turns to why recycling matters, rattle off some of these key facts and benefits.

Benefit 1 — Recycling has positive environmental impact

Recycling plastics helps the environment by diverting ocean-bound plastics, reducing greenhouse gases and limiting energy consumption.

In 2016 the [World Economic Forum made a dire prediction](#): that by 2050 our oceans could have more plastic than fish! That's alarming. We cannot let this happen — we must get behind projects that divert those ocean-bound plastics. You can look at [Lavergne's project in Haiti](#) as an inspiring example of how ocean-bound plastics can be diverted and processed for renewal.

Plastic recycling also helps reduce our carbon footprint. A 2018 study commissioned by the Association of Plastic Recyclers focused on three common types of plastics that can be recycled with current technology:

- Polypropylene (PP)
- Polyethylene terephthalate (PET) and
- High-density polyethylene (HDPE)

The report shows how recycling plastics can drive significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption.

Specifically, the reports concluded that, depending on the plastic type, using recycled plastic resins can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by between 67 percent and 71 percent. When it comes to energy consumption, the savings were reported as 79 percent for PET, 88 percent for PP and 88 percent for HDPE.

Benefit 2 — Recycling reduces landfill

Nobody wants more landfill. Unfortunately, as our global population grows, the need for landfills also increases. The US Environmental Protection Agency says [roughly 26.8 million tons of plastics were sent to landfills in the United States](#) in 2017. That's about a 10 percent increase over the 24.3 million tons sent in 2010.

Efficient recycling earlier in the disposal process could reduce these numbers greatly, since landfills are not always equipped to do the recycling themselves. Recycling also reduces the nasty side-effects of landfills, which sometimes leak dangerous products into the environment.

Benefit 3 — Recycling creates jobs

Plastics recycling has the potential to create a range of good, sustainable jobs.

The Carolina Plastics Recycling Council has the perfectly-named website —

www.yourbottlemeansjobs.com — that points to the wide range of unskilled, technical and scientific jobs associated with plastics recycling.

Just looking at a typical recycling supply chain, you will see:

- Drivers collecting and transporting the plastics
- Sorters placing the plastics in the right spot, and
- Technicians, machine operators and plant managers operating the facilities
- Engineers and scientists planning the compounding process and resins

If you look at [Lavergne's unique operation in Haiti](#), you'll see inspiring new opportunities for people collecting plastic water bottles, and being paid for delivering them to the collection centres.

Benefit 4 — Recycling leads economic and social transformation

Here's an exciting part — when people see how recycling helps everything from protecting the environment to creating sustainable new products, it transforms the way they think. We recently wrote about [the "circular economy"](#) where products reaching their end of life are renewed rather than discarded.

It's a transformative idea. We start seeing people as "users" rather than "consumers," and customers start expecting manufacturers to make innovative products with recycled materials.

Lavergne — Making Plastic Circular

Lavergne is at the forefront of [creating circular ecosystems for plastics](#). We believe the benefits are significant, and like the circular production chain — infinite. They will transform people's lives and the world we live in. It's our shared future.

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