

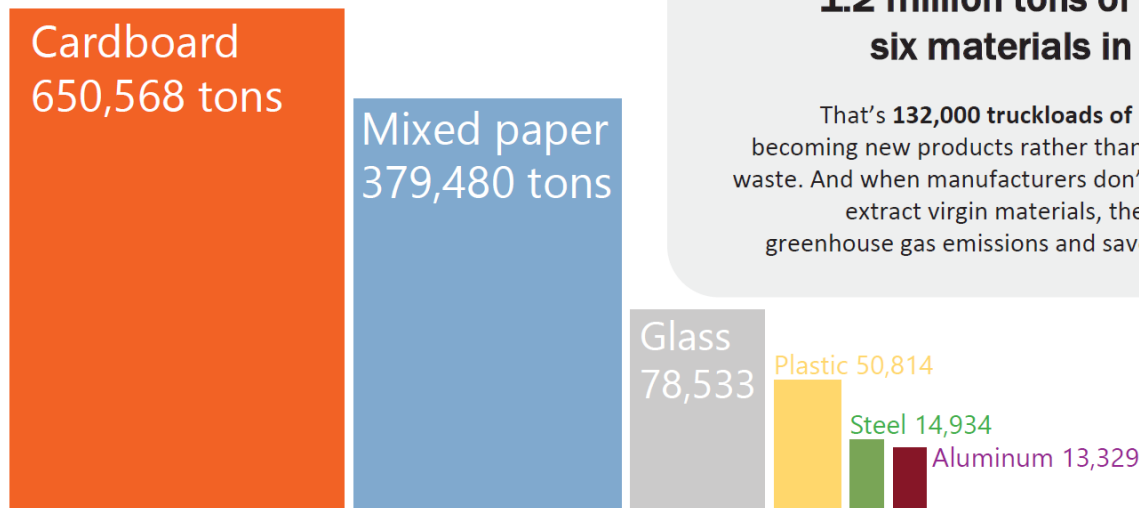
# Environmental Benefits of Recycling

## Focus on Sustainable Materials Management

### Overview

Thousands of tons of recyclables circulate through Washington’s recycling facilities every day. Recycling not only prevents pollution from landfilling and incinerating materials, it also reduces the environmental burden of extracting and manufacturing virgin materials.

### Common recyclables in 2018

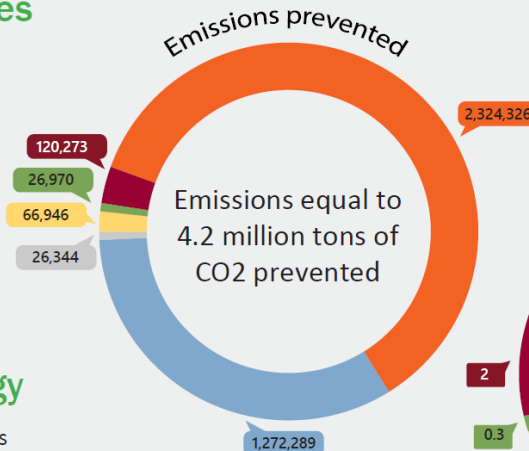


### Washingtonians recycled 1.2 million tons of these six materials in 2018

That’s **132,000 truckloads of material**<sup>1</sup> becoming new products rather than going to waste. And when manufacturers don’t have to extract virgin materials, they reduce greenhouse gas emissions and save energy.

### Recycling prevents greenhouse gases

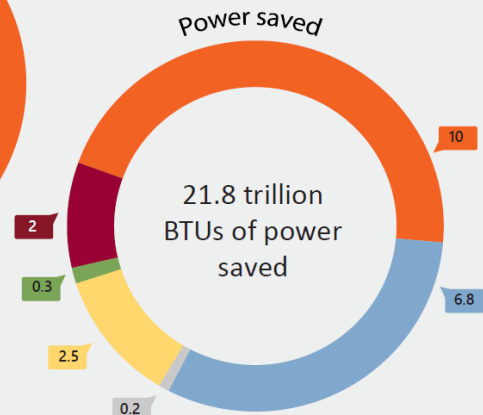
It would take **4.7 million acres of forest**<sup>3</sup> to absorb the emissions saved by recycling these materials – more than double the size of the Olympic, Mount Rainier and North Cascades national parks combined.



### Washingtonians sent 48 percent of their municipal solid waste to recycling and other waste recovery methods in 2018.

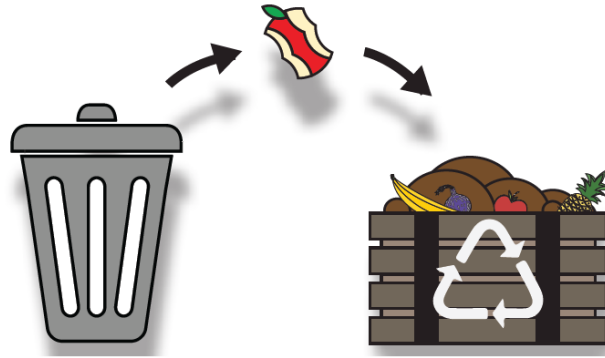
### And saves energy

Recycling these six materials saved enough energy to power nearly **238,013 homes**<sup>2</sup> for a year.



# Recycling **organics** feeds **compost** instead of landfills

Washingtonians recovered **2.0 million tons** – that’s 222,000 truckloads<sup>1</sup> – of organics in 2018. Composted food scraps and yard debris reduced greenhouse gases by **24,000 passenger vehicles<sup>2</sup>** driven for a year.



Up to **42 percent** of residential waste in Washington could be composted.

Washingtonians create **13.4 pounds** of waste per person per day



6.4 pounds to **waste recovery** and 7.0 pounds to **landfills**



## A piece of the puzzle

Recycling is an essential piece of the puzzle among our many goals at Ecology, but it’s not the whole picture. Our goal is to reduce environmental impacts, including climate impacts, through all stages of a product’s life cycle – not only its end stage.

## Information sources

1. <https://www.waste360.com/blog/how-green-was-my-garbage-truck>
2. <https://www.epa.gov/warm>
3. <https://www.epa.gov/energy/greenhouse-gas-equivalencies-calculator>



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To request an ADA accommodation, contact Ecology by phone at 360-407-6000 or email at [SWMPublications@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:SWMPublications@ecy.wa.gov).

More information at <https://ecology.wa.gov/accessibility>. For Relay Service or TTY call 711 or 877-833-6343.