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Is Recycling Worthwhile?

According to the EPA, paper makes up nearly 30 percent of all wastes Americans throw away each year, more than any other material. According to the KDHE in Kansas, paper is almost 40 percent. However, Americans have recycled about 63 percent of the paper they used in 2010. This recovered paper is used to make new paper products, saving trees and other natural resources. Most community or office recycling programs accept paper and paper products. Check what your community or office program accepts before you put it in the bin.

In the City of Lawrence we have almost 100 drop-off sites that accept paper, cardboard, glass, plastic and other materials including hazardous waste. In a report to the Lawrence City Commission in Jan 2010 the City Auditor of Lawrence questions the recycling rate that the solid waste division is reporting. They are claiming Lawrence is recycling about 35% of all MSW. This is without a formal curbside recycling program. Presently there are 6 private companies offering recycling services for prices that range from \$8.00 to \$20.00 per month. The city is considering and has issued an RFP to adopt a mandatory curbside recycling program that says you will pay even if you don't use the service. Responses to an RFP have shown that it will add approximately \$4.00 to \$5.00 per month to the utility bill.

As the statistics from The Office of Solid Waste of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency show, a well-run curbside recycling program can cost, under general circumstances, between \$50 to \$150 per ton. According to the Lawrence RFP they are estimating about 5000 tons per month of recycled materials. What doesn't add up is that there are about 30,000 customers for solid waste in Lawrence and figuring \$50 per ton for 5,000 tons that comes to \$250,000. With 30,000 customers times \$5 per customer that comes to \$150,000. What is wrong with this picture?

Because the citizens of Lawrence have done such an effective job of recycling, why is the city going to mandate a curbside recycling program? It is not needed and the citizens who do recycle will do their civic duty and continue to recycle.

I am asking the committee to add a few lines to HR 2072 and HR2074. "Any political sub division which enacts a mandatory recycling program, curbside or other, must provide an opt-out provision, if a private person or private entity does not wish to participate in the recycling program. Also, this would include any mandatory programs already in operation."

My rationale is that the per pound rate of recycling is leveling off and will maintain about 35-40% of the total MSW because the REAL main driving force behind recycling is the prices for the recycled materials. Attached is a chart from KDHE showing the MSW generated, recycled, and landfilled from 2005 to 2011 in Kansas. Notice that the total amount of MSW generated has dropped by 5% from 2005 to 2011. The amount of recycled material has increased by almost 60% during the same time period.

But because the market value of the recycled products fluctuates so much some of the material will be returned to the landfill after being recycled: such as paper, glass and some plastics. At certain times it is not cost effective to process these materials so they end up in the landfill. Thank you for time and consideration

Summary - MSW Recycling in Kansas - 2011

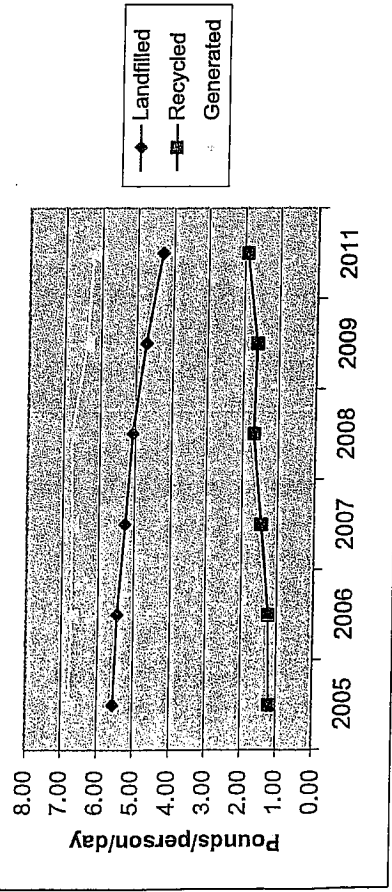
Material	Tons	Total Tons	Percent
Corrugated Paper	271,591		
Other Paper	129,274		
		<u>400,865</u>	<u>39.6%</u>
Metal: Aluminum Cans	4,757		
Metal: Other Nonferrous	57,978		
		<u>62,735</u>	<u>6.2%</u>
Metal: Other Ferrous (excluding autos)	324,279		
		<u>324,279</u>	<u>32.0%</u>
Lead/Acid Batteries		2,436	0.2%
Plastic		17,489	1.7%
Glass		24,428	2.4%
E-waste		2,942	0.3%
Other*		177,071	17.5%
Total Tons Recycled (not including Auto Scrap or Tires)		1,012,244	100.0%
Total MSW Generated		3,269,464	
MSW Recycling Rate (not including Auto Bodies or Tires)		31.0%	

*Other includes: Textiles, Wood, Yard & Food Waste

2005 - 2011 Kansas Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) Generated, Recycled & Landfilled

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2011
Total KS MSW Landfilled (tons)	2,786,535	2,760,833	2,671,298	2,599,257	2,428,512	2,257,219
Total KS MSW Recycled (tons)	606,796	629,431	740,971	865,631	836,508	1,012,244
Total KS MSW Generated (tons)	3,393,331	3,390,264	3,412,269	3,464,888	3,265,020	3,269,464
Standard Recycling Rate	17.9%	18.6%	21.7%	25.0%	25.6%	31.0%
Population	2,744,687	2,764,075	2,775,997	2,802,134	2,807,187	2,871,238
Pounds MSW landfilled/person/day	5.56	5.47	5.27	5.08	4.74	4.31
Pounds MSW recycled/person/day	1.21	1.25	1.46	1.69	1.63	1.93
Pounds MSW generated/person/day	6.77	6.72	6.74	6.78	6.37	6.24

2005-2011 MSW Generated, Recycled & Landfilled



KDHE Recycling Survey Tabulations
Comparative 2005 to 2011

	<u>2005</u>	<u>2011</u>
Q. 1 Do you currently recycle?		
Yes.....	65%	85%
No.....	35%	15%
Q. 2 What items do you recycle on a regular basis?		
Aluminum cans	65%	81%
Steel cans	14%	30%
Glass	18%	42%
Newspapers.....	52%	56%
Magazines	11%	44%
Cardboard	10%	45%
Other paper.....	14%	44%
Plastic.....	33%	70%
Yard waste-grass & leaves.....	1%	10%
Electronic devices.....	1%	4%
Anything else.....	1%	3%
Q. 4 How important do you rate the following environmental habits?		
a. Recycling		
Very important	60%	80%
Somewhat important.....	32%	16%
Not very important.....	7%	1%
Not at all important.....	1%	1%

	<u>2005</u>	<u>2011</u>
b. Composting yard wastes like grass, etc.		
Very important	37%	39%
Somewhat important.....	41%	40%
Not very important.....	12%	16%
Not at all important.....	10%	3%
c. Proper disposal or reuse of hazardous household waste		
Very important	80%	84%
Somewhat important.....	14%	12%
Not very important.....	4%	1%
Not at all important.....	3%	1%
d. Reducing litter		
Very important	80%	84%
Somewhat important.....	17%	11%
Not very important.....	2%	2%
Not at all important.....	1%	1%
e. Reducing illegal dumping		
Very important	91%	86%
Somewhat important.....	7%	10%
Not very important.....	0%	1%
Not at all important.....	2%	1%
f. Buying recyclable products		
Very important	48%	55%
Somewhat important.....	45%	34%
Not very important.....	4%	4%
Not at all important.....	3%	3%
g. Recycling and proper disposal of electronic devices		
Very important	59%	68%
Somewhat important.....	30%	24%
Not very important.....	5%	3%
Not at all important.....	6%	2%

2005

2011

h. Proper operation of landfills		
Very important	88%	78%
Somewhat important.....	11%	15%
Not very important.....	0%	2%
Not at all important.....	1%	1%
i. Educating adults on environmental issues		
Very important	69%	64%
Somewhat important.....	28%	28%
Not very important.....	1%	4%
Not at all important.....	1%	2%
j. Educating youth on environmental issues		
Very important	80%	78%
Somewhat important.....	18%	16%
Not very important.....	0%	4%
Not at all important.....	2%	1%