



Preserving Resources,
Preventing Waste

The New Jersey WasteWise Bulletin

Newsletter of the New Jersey WasteWise Business Network – Spring 2024
WasteWise ... improving your bottom line and the environment
through waste reduction, recycling, and recycled product procurement.

Bottle Redemption Systems Explored

Bottle redemption systems, sometimes referred to as bottle bill programs, were the topic of a recent all-day information gathering meeting that was held to give the public a chance to weigh in on this hot issue.

In bottle redemption programs, consumers pay a per container fee in the form of a deposit that is refunded when the empty container is returned for recycling at certain stores or designated redemption centers. In most states with such programs, the fee is 5 cents per bottle. The idea behind this system is that consumers will have a financial incentive to return their empty containers, which, in turn, would lead to high recovery rates of recyclable containers. Proponents of bottle redemption programs also point to a reduction in container litter as another benefit.

The New Jersey Legislature explored the idea of a bottle redemption program in the mid-1980s. Ultimately, the Legislature decided not to pursue this approach and instead passed two pieces of legislation - the Clean Communities law and our state's mandatory recycling law. The Clean Communities law established a tax on 15 litter-generating products and annually provides funding generated by this tax to New Jersey municipalities and counties for litter prevention and cleanup programs. This tax is paid by manufacturers and producers of these products. The mandatory recycling law led to the development of comprehensive and convenient dual stream and single stream recycling programs throughout the state.

Comments on this issue may be sent to the DEP at singleuseplastics@dep.nj.gov.

Save Money and Reduce Waste Through Purchasing

One of the best ways to save money and prevent waste in business operations is through smart purchasing practices, such as the following strategies and policies:

- Perform lifecycle cost analyses that include an assessment of a product's maintenance, energy and water use, and disposal costs;
- Allow a price preference for durable, reusable, repairable, and recycled products;
- Conduct a pre-purchase review to consider alternatives to disposable and single use products;
- Re-evaluate items to be purchased to make sure that they are really necessary;
- Practice "just-in-time supply" to avoid over purchasing and spoilage;
- Buy concentrated cleaning solutions in bulk form;
- Purchase products without packaging, with less packaging, or in reusable packaging;
- Ask vendors to take back packaging;
- Purchase copiers and printers that make two-sided copies;
- Purchase refurbished toner cartridges;
- Negotiate longer, more comprehensive warranties and service contracts for equipment;
- Educate employees about waste prevention through purchasing;
- Try to repair, refurbish, or rebuild before buying new; and
- Purchase quality used or remanufactured products instead of new ones.

Did You Know...

- New Jersey achieved a 54% total recycling rate and a 37% municipal solid waste recycling rate in 2021.
- Spent cooking fats, oils, and grease generated by cafeterias, restaurants, and food production facilities are readily recyclable and valuable!
- It is estimated that U.S. consumers purchase 11.9 million disposable e-cigarettes every month!
- Food pantries and food banks accept new or gently used reusable shopping bags, which are then utilized to distribute food to the needy. This not only helps the environment but helps to keep costs down for these organizations.
- The SMART tire was recognized as one of the best inventions of 2023 by Time magazine. This airless tire was developed using technology from NASA's Mars Rover project and will never go flat, thereby reducing scrap tire waste. For more information, visit <https://smarttirecompany.com/cycling>.
- The recycling of steel from automobiles is estimated to save the equivalent energy necessary to power 18 million homes every year.
- The DEP's food waste reduction plan calls for food waste generation to be reduced annually by 50% by the year 2030. The plan is available at https://www.nj.gov/dep/dshw/food-waste/food_waste_reduction_plan.html.
- Clean Ocean Action will host "Beach Sweeps" litter cleanups at various New Jersey shore locations on April 13 from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Learn more at <https://cleanoceanaction.org/be-the-solution-to-ocean-pollution>.
- The Noho Move Chair is made from recycled plastic fishing nets and carpeting. Check it out at <https://noho.co/us/shop-all>.
- Businesses that establish "upcycle stations" for used office supplies that staff can access, save money on the purchase of new office supplies and reduce their waste generation.
- A typical National Football League game generates about 35 tons of waste!

Updated Food Waste Guide for Schools Now Available

The N.J. Department of Environmental Protection recently issued updated food waste guidelines for K-12 schools and higher education institutions that will help them to establish or improve programs to reduce, recover and recycle surplus food and food waste. The new guidelines update the original protocols that debuted in 2019 and provide up-to-date food waste best management practices. Better management of food waste in schools will reduce the amount of organic material entering landfills, which in turn will reduce greenhouse gas generation and help schools reduce their carbon footprint. Download the guide at https://dep.nj.gov/wp-content/uploads/sustainability/school-food-waste-guidelines/school_food_waste_guidelines_february_2024.pdf.

Pollution Prevention Makes Sense for Businesses

Pollution Prevention (known as P2) strategies reduce unwanted hazardous substances at their source and reduce the environmental impact of industrial operations. Businesses that embrace pollution prevention strategies discover that responsible environmental management goes hand in hand with financial growth. Clearly, pollution prevention is more cost effective than pollution control.

The N.J. Department of Environmental Protection's Office of Pollution Prevention tracks the use and disposal of hazardous substances, provides resources that encourage good materials handling, and conducts facility inspections as it implements the N.J. Pollution Prevention Act. Visit <https://dep.nj.gov/sustainability/pollution-prevention/> for more information.



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<http://www.nj.gov/dep/dshw/recycling/wastewise/brbn03.htm>