

Dear Neighbors,

As Simsbury residents, we have all experienced first-hand the breath-taking beauty of the outdoors; we recognize our duty to protect our community and our state from pollution, littering, and other environmental threats to the backyard we know and love.

Let's all work together to keep our environment clean and to teach our children the habits necessary to be good stewards of the land. I hope you find the information and tips in this brochure helpful.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding any business before the General Assembly, please feel free to contact me. I can be reached at my legislative office at (860) 240-8547 or by e-mail: [Linda.Schofield@cga.ct.gov](mailto:Linda.Schofield@cga.ct.gov).

Sincerely,

Linda Schofield  
State Representative, 16th District



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# State Representative Linda Schofield

Representing the 16th District  
Simsbury



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## Recycling: The First Step Toward Protecting Our Environment



# Recycling: The First Step Toward Protecting Our Environment

## What can I do in my personal life that will help conserve the environment?

- Instead of throwing away your glass, plastic, paper, and metal, recycle it by first rinsing anything that held food or drink, and then placing the item in recycling bins.
- To keep recycling simple at home, keep a separate recycling bin for paper next to your desk. In your kitchen, designate separate bins for glass, plastic, and metal.
- When putting recyclable paper or newspaper on the curb, don't put the materials in plastic bags, which "contaminate" the recyclable paper; instead, use paper bags or twine.
- Ask your employer to help you recycle at work by placing recycling bins in offices and cafeterias.
- At shops and fast food places you often visit, suggest that they use recycled paper products and also provide recycling receptacles.
- Use fewer plastic bags: bring canvas bags with you on shopping trips or just carry a small number of items by hand. You can recycle your old plastic bags at Stop and Shop (they send bags to Advanced Environmental Recycling Technologies where they are turned into decking products).
- Ask catalogue companies to take you off their lists if you rarely buy from them.
- Instead of using disposable cups, bring a travel mug from home to your favorite coffee shop. Not only will it be sturdier, but also it is better for the environment.
- Avoid using Styrofoam plates and cups and plastic cutlery whenever possible, since these items consume more energy to make than cleaning reusable dishes.
- Compost your food waste to cut down on trash sent to the dump. Take used cooking oil to the Flamig Farm right here in Simsbury, where it can be turned into bio-diesel that fuels farm machines.
- Whenever possible, encourage recycling by buying goods made of recycled materials.

## Why should I recycle?

- First and foremost, we are running out of space for our trash. We generate more trash than any other nation: 3.1 to 4.5 pounds per person per day. Since 55.7% of our trash goes to landfills, dumps are filling up and closing at a rate of one per day. While we had 18,500 dumps in 1979, we have only one tenth of them left.
- Even the dumps that are still open pose problems for the environment. Although EPA guidelines require protective liners to prevent liquids from leaching into the ground and venting systems to catch methane gasses from escaping into the air, 82% of all landfills leak, making them a constant threat to our environment. In addition, their foul smell and unsightly appearance make them unpopular in communities.
- Even in dumps monitored properly, decomposition rates of glass, plastic, and metal are very slow. Plastic only breaks down when exposed to UV light, while metal can be oxidized if exposed to air, which are both unlikely to occur in a dump. Glass, on the other hand, does not decompose and must be crushed to dust or sand.

- By throwing glass, plastic, paper and metal away into dumps, these resources cannot be reused, requiring manufacturers to consume more natural resources. Paper makers must resort to deforestation, which reduces the Earth's capacity to produce oxygen and absorb carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas.
- By recycling we can reduce the amount of carbon emitted during the manufacturing process, mine less, drill less, and cut fewer forests down. By reducing our environmental impact, we will decrease smog, acid rain, and water contamination.
- Recycling directly decreases our consumption of energy. By using recycled aluminum to make new cans for example, we use 95% less energy; using recycled plastics decreases energy consumption by 75%; recycled steel, by 60%; recycled paper, by 40%; and recycled glass, by 30%. Therefore, throwing out a can of aluminum wastes as much energy as if it were half full of gasoline.
- Recycling even makes sense economically: The Waste and Resources Action Program tracked the life cycle of recyclable materials and found that in 83% of cases, recycling was more cost-efficient than throwing the materials out with the trash.

## But don't we already recycle enough?

- We only recycle 32% of our trash, palling in comparison to most of Europe, which recycles 60%, and particularly Switzerland, which recycles 89%.
- We carelessly consume our resources. One worker in one office can use one fourth of a ton of materials per year, including 10,000 pieces of copy paper. Heating, cooling, and power systems in offices contributes to 40% of carbon dioxide emissions and 70% of electricity usage in the United States.



## Besides recycling, what can I do to protect the environment?

- Use a clothesline to dry your clothing.
- Convert all the light bulbs in your house to compact fluorescent bulbs which use less energy (saving you money too!).
- Turn your car off instead of idling while you are waiting.
- Drape your windows to keep the sun's heat out in the summer (so you can use less air conditioning).
- Turn your heat down at night and whenever you're away at work. Programmable thermostats make this easy.