

Recycling goes far, far beyond the bin at the edge of the curb. In fact, in 2015 alone, more than 130 million metric tons of scrap metal, paper, plastic, glass, textiles, rubber, and electronics, valued at more than \$80 billion, were manufactured into specification grade commodities by the scrap recycling industry in the United States. These commodities were sold as valuable feedstock material to industrial consumers in the United States and in nearly 160 countries around the world and contributed nearly \$18 billion in export sales, significantly helping the U.S. trade balance.

The U.S.-based scrap recycling industry is a sophisticated, capital-intensive industry that employs approximately 149,000 workers in the United States. As the first link in the manufacturing supply chain, scrap recycling has been integral to the U.S. economy, global trade, and resource sustainability for more than 200 years.



U.S. Economy

	2010	2015
Industry Size	\$77 Billion	\$106 Billion
Employment (Yearly Average)	107,000	149,000
Volume of Scrap Material Annually Processed (Metric Tons)		
Iron and Steel	66,000,000	67,000,000
Paper	46,800,000	47,210,000
Aluminum	4,600,000	5,014,000
Copper	1,900,000	1,784,000
Lead	1,200,000	1,166,000
Zinc	160,000	120,000
Plastic (bottles)	655,000 (2009)	634,000 (2014)
Electronics	3,500,000	\$5 Million+ (est)
Tires (# of tires)	90,000,000	122,000,000



Environment

Scrap recycling reduces greenhouse gas emissions by requiring significantly less energy to manufacture products from recyclables than virgin materials and by avoiding landfilling.

Energy saved using recycled materials is up to:

92% for aluminum	90% for copper	87% for plastic
68% for paper	56% for steel	34% for glass

Scrap recycling conserves natural resources:
Recycling one ton of:

- Paper saves 3.3 cubic yards of landfill.
- Steel conserves 2,500 lbs. of iron ore, 1,400 lbs. of coal, and 120 lbs. of limestone.
- Aluminum conserves more than 4 metric tons of bauxite ore.

Cleaner air and water result from safely removing potentially hazardous materials and keeping them out of landfills:

- Mercury switches removed from older automobiles
- Lead recovered from computer monitors



Global Trends

	2010	2015
Value of Scrap Commodities Exported Helping U.S. Trade Balances	\$29.6 Billion	\$17.5 Billion
Metric Tons of Scrap Exported Including:	45.3 Million	37 Million
Iron and Steel	18.7 Million	11.7 Million
Paper	18.9 Million	19.6 Million
Aluminum	1.9 Million	1.6 Million
Plastic	2.0 Million	2 Million
Nickel, Stainless, and Alloy	1.9 Million	1.1 Million
Copper	1.0 Million	954,000
Lead	44,000	46,000
Zinc	78,000	55,000
Rubber	172,000	83,000
Number of Countries Scrap was Exported to and Leading Destinations / Value	158 Countries	156 Countries
China	\$8.5 Billion	\$6 Billion
Canada	\$3.0 Billion	\$2 Billion
South Korea	\$1.7 Billion	\$960 Million
Mexico	\$1.0 Billion	\$955 Million
Turkey	\$1.5 Billion	\$932 Million
India	\$0.8 Billion	\$914 Million
Switzerland	-	\$844 Million
United Kingdom	\$1.1 Billion	\$653 Million
Germany	\$0.7 Billion	\$612 Million
Taiwan	\$1.4 Billion	\$597 Million
Italy	\$0.7 Billion	\$549 Million
Japan	\$0.6 Billion	\$539 Million



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