

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 5, 2006

Dear Colleague:

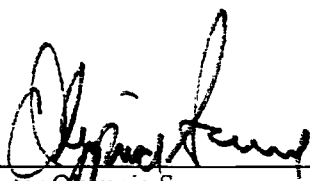
Recycling is one of the most visible and respected facets of America's environmental, energy, and sustainability policies. However, the issues facing the recycling industry have become more nuanced over the years, while understanding of the industry has remained relatively stagnant. Today, recycling faces many obstacles to its continued growth, such as regulatory barriers that impede recycling, and trade barriers that limit the industry's access to supplies.

Therefore, we invite you to join us in forming the Senate Recycling Caucus, a bipartisan organization to discuss issues surrounding the recycling of paper, glass, plastic, metals, rubber, textiles, and other commodities. By better understanding recycling issues we can develop effective public policies to increase recycling rates in America, and benefit both our environment and our economy. The caucus will address five broad areas that are vital to improving recycling in America:


- **Supply** (improving both the quality and quantity of recycling commodities):
- **Market Development** (finding new uses for recyclable material which, in turn, will increase demand for recyclables):
- **Design For Recycling** (market based ideas to encourage manufacturers, to the extent practicable, to design their products with few, if any hazardous and toxic substances, and to minimize or eliminate impediments to recycling):
- **Energy Savings** (using recycled materials saves a much larger amount of energy than using first-use products):
- **Education/Communication** (the Recycling Caucus will be a forum in which issues are raised and vetted, and by which Caucus members and their staffs can be informed about recycling issues: for example, transportation, trade, and definitional issues, among others may be raised in this focus area).

Through this Caucus we will have an opportunity to expand and improve one of our nation's most vital tools in fighting pollution and waste. We look forward to having you join us. If you have any questions about the Recycling Caucus, please contact Ginny Worrest of Senator Snowe's staff at 4-1946, or Sam Hodas of Senator Carper's staff at 4-3169.

Sincerely,



Senator Olympia Snowe
Co-chairman, Senate Recycling Caucus



Senator Tom Carper
Co-chairman, Senate Recycling Caucus

Overview

Think about recycling and what do you see? For most, the image that comes up is of a family placing the recycling bin at the curb, doing their part to help the environment. The chasing triangle that represents the never-ending cycle of material evokes positive reactions from nearly everyone.

Consumer, commercial, and industrial recycling make up an industry that preserves energy today and resources for future generations. Recycling includes not only newspapers, beverage cans and bottles, it includes recyclable materials from autos, appliances, buildings, and much more - all diverted from the waste stream and back into the economy.

The advantages of recycling are numerous. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), recycled aluminum saves the nation 95 percent of the energy that would have been needed to make new aluminum from ore. Recycled iron and steel result in energy savings of 74 percent; recycled copper, 85 percent; recycled paper, 64 percent; and recycled plastic, more than 80 percent, all from materials that would otherwise be destined for landfills. Each year, scrap processing keeps over 130 million tons of material out of landfills. And, since the United States generates more scrap metal than we can use each year, the materials exported are among the few commodities that enjoy a positive balance of trade.

In addition, according to an EPA funded study conducted by the National Recycling Coalition, recycling creates 1.1 million U.S. jobs, \$236 billion in gross annual sales and \$37 billion in annual payrolls. For every job on the curb collecting recyclables, there are 26 more U.S. jobs processing and manufacturing using those collected recyclables.

With near universal agreement that recycling is good for our economy, our environment, and our future, it's hard to imagine that anyone would intentionally impede the recycling process. But it happens every day. Today's laws often unintentionally regulate scrap as waste and scrap processors as waste handlers. These laws and regulation can and do limit the full recovery of recycled materials.

Caucus Purpose

The purpose of the Recycling Caucus is to minimize waste and promote sustainable economies through recycling; increase American's participation in recycling; encourage design of products and packages that maximize the use of recycled materials and recovery of those materials; encourage and foster innovative and effective technologies and collaborations between public, private and government sectors and address international trade issues through the education of Senators and their staff.

Caucus Organization

The Recycling Caucus will be led by Senator Snowe and Senator Carper serving as Co-Chairs. Interested Senators are invited to serve as members of the Caucus.

Caucus operation

The Caucus will meet once a year with industry leaders to prioritize issues that the Caucus will address that session. Industry will work with Caucus staff in advance of the annual meeting and during the session with regard to information about the priority issues.

Informational meetings between industry and Caucus members may occur throughout the year.

For more information, or to join the Senate Recycling Caucus, contact:

Ginny Worrest of Senator Snowe's staff at 4-1946, or Sam Hodas of Senator Carper's staff at 4-3169.