Global Trade

Scrap has been an important export commodity from the U.S. for more than a century. Over 54 million tons of scrap were exported in 2010, with nearly 200 U.S. paper mills using recycled paper as a raw material each year. ISRI was formed in 1937 through the merger of the Institute of Scrap Iron and Steel (ISIS), founded in 1928, and the Scrap Iron and Steel Institute (SISI), founded in 1913. The U.S. scrap recycling industry is a sophisticated, capital-intensive industry that directly employs 135,000 workers in the United States. These commodities were sold as valuable feedstock material to industrial consumers in the United States and in more than 160 countries around the world and contributed nearly $3.2 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 directly employs 135,000 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.

Environment

Recycling goes far, far beyond the bin at the edge of the curb. In 2011 alone, more than 134 million metric tons of scrap metal, paper, plastic, glass, textiles, rubber and electronics, valued at between $80 and $100 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 more than 160 countries around the world and contributed nearly $3.2 billion in export sales, significantly helping the U.S. trade balance.

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Recent independent research shows there is enough material to meet domestic manufacture’s demand for recycled materials for the foreseeable future.
Recognizing the difference is critical to promoting sustainability in our communities. Recycling is not disposal. Scarp is not waste and recycling is not disposal. Scrap is manufactured into valuable, specification-grade commodities that are used to make new products. Waste is material that has no further use in its land-filled or incinerated form. Too often laws and regulations lump recyclables together which can have the unintended consequence of making recycling more difficult for consumers, businesses, and industries. It diverts hundreds of thousands more in related industries. It diverts over 150 million tons of material that would otherwise end up in landfills. The scrap industry also makes a substantial contribution to the U.S. balance of trade, exporting 230 billion in products to other countries. 

The U.S. scrap recycling industry is big business. Scrap facilities invest millions of dollars in the infrastructure that makes recycling possible. Our investment and industry's knowledge and expertise make it economically practical. Technology make it economically practical. The industry's knowledge and expertise make recycling possible. Our investment and technology make it economically practical. The majority of recyclable material generated in the United States ends its life and begins a new life at a for-profit professional scrap recycling facility. Scrap recycling is a $90 billion industry in the United States that transforms obsolete materials from consumers, businesses, and manufacturers into useful raw material that are essential to the manufacturing of new products. The scrap recycling industry's knowledge and expertise make recycling possible. Our investment and technology make it economically practical. The U.S. scrap recycling industry is big business. Scrap facilities invest millions of dollars in the infrastructure that makes recycling possible. Our investment and industry's knowledge and expertise make it economically practical. The majority of recyclable material generated in the United States ends its life and begins a new life at a for-profit professional scrap recycling facility. Scrap recycling is a $90 billion industry in the United States that transforms obsolete materials from consumers, businesses, and manufacturers into useful raw material that are essential to the manufacturing of new products. The scrap recycling industry's knowledge and expertise make recycling possible. Our investment and technology make it economically practical.