

The Case for U.S. Exports of Scrap Commodities

- Across the board, exports play a critical role in boosting economic health. According to the U.S. Commerce Department, for every billion dollars of U.S. exports, more than 5,000 U.S. jobs are supported and the U.S. International Trade Association projects that U.S. exports supported an estimated 9.2 million jobs in 2010, up from 8.7 million in 2009.
- Exports have outpaced the rest of the economy, growing by 11% in 2010 and by 4% in the 3rd quarter of 2011, giving a much-needed boost to the economy and making a significant contribution to our balance of trade.
- Such figures have led the Obama administration to launch an initiative to double U.S. exports by 2015 – the U.S. scrap recycling industry stands ready to help meet this goal. In fact, President Barack Obama, in his first State of the Union address to Congress, highlighted exports as a pillar of economic growth on which the country will depend in the future. Click [here](#) to learn more about the [National Export Initiative](#).
- While some may advocate for protectionist measures, the truth is that limiting exports will only put a stop to the economic growth and job creation that we are already witnessing. History has repeatedly shown that protectionist measures are precisely the wrong prescription for promoting economic recovery and expansion. Restricting exports in order to promote growth is something like eliminating food in order to promote good health... eventually it starves the patient.
- To suggest that the export of recycled commodities is somehow immune from sound economic theory and that banning them would destroy jobs in the United States displays a fundamental misunderstanding of how the manufacturing industry works. Demand for U.S. manufactured goods is determined by consumers, not by the supply of scrap. It is no different than saying that the export of corn, coal or cotton somehow hurts American workers.
- The fact of the matter is that a significant majority of scrap processed in the United States is also consumed in the United States. The scrap recycling industry processes more than enough material to meet the needs of U.S. industry and relies on export markets as a valuable outlet to meet supply.
- Scrap exports are proven job creators. According to a study conducted by John Dunham and Associates, U.S. scrap exports currently directly and indirectly support some 162,000 U.S. jobs while having generated \$30 billion in export sales in 2010, significantly helping our balance of trade.
- The electronic scrap recycling industry is one of the most dynamic and fastest growing segments of the industry and generated an estimated revenue of more than \$5.2 billion to the U.S. economy (up from less than \$1 billion in 2002), employed more than 30,000 full-time employees (up from 6,000 in 2002 and when non-profit organizations are included, could be above 45,000 in 2010) and collected and processed domestically more than 3.5 million of used and end-of-life electronics in 2010 (up from 600,000 tons in 2002).
- Certification programs such as R2, RIOS™, R2/RIOS and the Certified Electronics Recycler® are the best way to promote safe and responsible recycling practices. The best ways to create jobs, promote recycling and foster economic growth are through open markets and free trade.
- As the voice of the recycling industry, there is no organization more committed to promoting and raising public awareness of the economic and environmental benefits of

recycling and the vital role that the scrap recycling industry plays in creating jobs, promoting economic growth and sustaining our natural resources than ISRI. But protectionist measures and the spread of misinformation about the benefits of scrap exports are not the ways to accomplish those goals.