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Inside this Brief

- Background
- Oregon's Recovery Rate
- Staff and Agency Contacts

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Background Brief on...

Recycling

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Background

Oregon has been a national leader in the area of recycling. The following outlines the recycling legislation beginning in 1971:

The Bottle Bill – In 1971, Oregon enacted the “bottle bill.” This bottle deposit law has been called the most effective recycling program in American history and is the nation’s longest-standing deposit law. Within two years of its implementation, over 90 percent of all carbonated beverage containers were being recycled, and over 80 percent of the amount of roadside container litter disappeared.

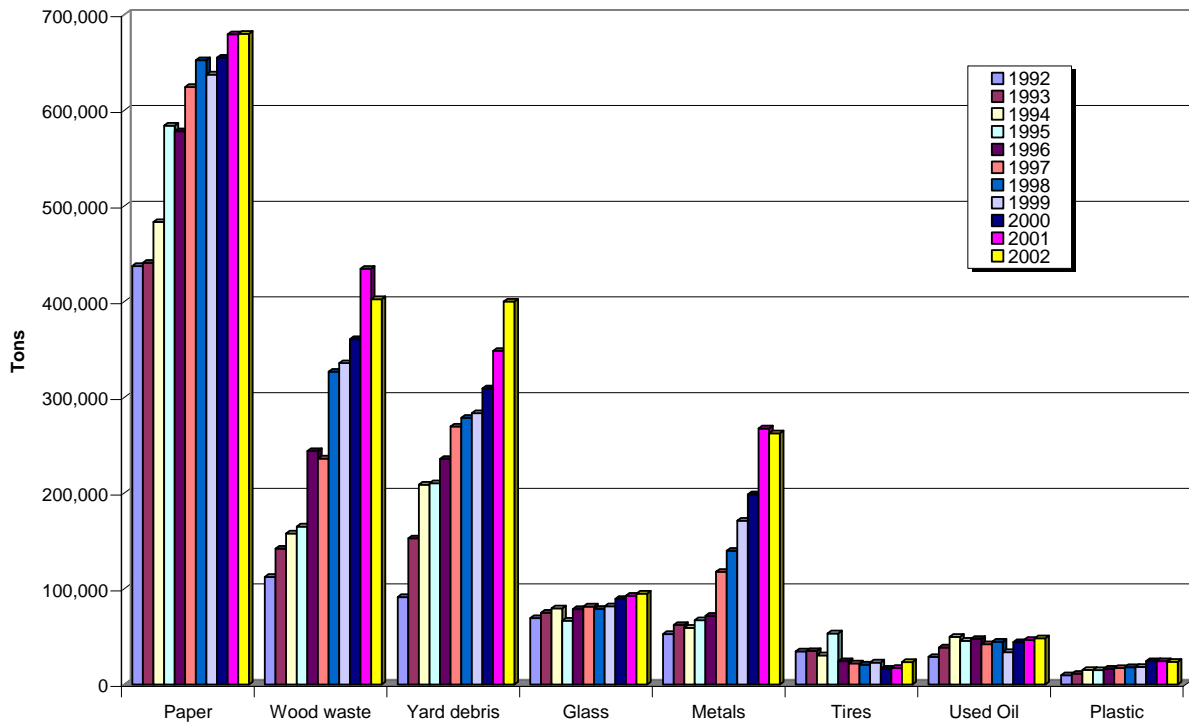
The Recycling Opportunity Act – Enacted in 1983, this Act directs all Oregon cities, with a population over 4,000, to offer monthly curbside recycling. In many areas, curbside collection is made on the same day as regular garbage services. For rural communities, recycle drop-off depots are located at public landfills and other appropriate locations.

The Oregon Recycling Act – In 1991, the Oregon Legislature expanded the 1983 Recycling Act by adding provisions relating to the purchasing and re-manufacturing of recycled products. Provisions of the law focus on the entire recycling process, not just the collection process. In an effort to develop markets for recycled products and encourage industry to make new products and packaging from materials collected by consumers, the Act requires all state agencies to buy recycled and recyclable materials, ranging from paper to tires and motor oil. The Department of Environmental Quality (**DEQ**) is responsible for implementing the provisions contained in the 1991 Recycling Act.

In addition, the 1991 Act established recycling standards for all rigid plastic containers sold in Oregon, this is referred to as the Rigid Plastic Container Recycling Law.

The 1991 Act established the Material Recovery Survey, which established the statewide recycling goal of 50 percent recovery for Oregon by the year 2000.

Materials Recovered in Oregon
1992 - 2002



In 1995, the Legislative Assembly established the wasteshed¹ rates in ORS 459A.010 to measure Oregon’s recovery progress. Again in 1997, the Legislature enacted legislation requiring the wastesheds to set new voluntary goals and to maintain the lesser of their required rate or their actual 1996 rate. This legislation also provided for two-percent credits to be added to wasteshed recovery rates for waste prevention, reuse, and home composting programs approved by DEQ. In 2002, 12 of the 35 wastesheds received one or more of these credits.

The 2001 Recycling Act – In 2001, the Legislative Assembly established new statewide and wasteshed recovery goals. Oregon did not meet the goal of 50 percent recovery by the year 2000, established by

¹ Defined in ORS 459.005 - Wasteshed means an area of the state having a common solid waste disposal system or designated by the commission as an appropriate area of the state within which to develop a common recycling program.

the 1991 Legislature. The 2001 Legislature extended the 50 percent goal to 2009 and set an interim goal of 45 percent for 2005. In order to help Oregon meet these recovery goals, all the wastesheds set new recovery goals for 2005 and 2009. The 2001 recovery legislation (HB 3744) also required wastesheds to prepare plans to meet their goals and make them available to DEQ.

In addition, the 2001 Legislature enacted waste generation goals for the state. The waste generation goals are:

- For the calendar year 2005 and subsequent years, no annual increase in per capita municipal solid waste generation; and
- For the calendar year 2009 and subsequent years, no annual increase in municipal solid waste generation.

Oregon's Recovery Rate

The following materials are banned from solid waste disposal sites in Oregon:

- discarded or abandoned vehicles
- large home or industrial appliances
- used oil
- tires (tires chipped to DEQ standards can be landfilled)
- lead-acid batteries

The ban is intended to divert reusable and/or recyclable materials from Oregon's landfills. The first Material Recovery Survey in 1992 included 24 types of materials; the 2002 survey contains 36 materials. The above table² illustrates the types of material and volume collected and recycled beginning in 1992 through 2002.

The 2002 statewide recovery rate increased dramatically to 46.6 percent from 38.9 percent in 2000. The higher rate reflects increases in actual material waste recovery in Oregon, plus increases attributable to new ways of calculating the rate, as directed by the 2001 Legislative Assembly.

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² 2002 Material Recovery Survey, November 2003, DEQ. For full report see <http://www.deq.state.or.us/wmc/solwaste/rsw.htm>