



# THE BENEFITS OF RECYCLING PLASTIC MILK BOTTLES

**Conserves resources:** Recycling plastic milk bottles provides an environmentally friendly feedstock for making new products and substitutes recycled material for an equivalent amount of virgin plastic. Recycling a ton of plastic bottles saves the equivalent of 3.8 barrels of oil.<sup>1</sup>

**Helps the environment:** Plastic bottle recycling reduces greenhouse gas emissions by substituting recycled resin for new resin. In addition, bottles are bulky and each bottle recycled saves landfill space.

**Saves schools money on disposal costs:** Throwing away bottles or cartons costs money; schools pay for trash disposal by the cubic yard. Recycling bottles may reduce trash volume by ten percent or more.

**Creates the volume needed to have a viable recycling program:** Plastic milk bottles can easily be recycled and can be the one item that makes enough "critical mass" to be worthwhile for a recycling company to work with your district for no or very low cost.

**Teaches children social responsibility:** Reinforces learning to respect and take care of the environment.

## How to get the most from recycling

- Discuss what other materials can be recycled with the school administration and the recycling company. The more material recycled the better customer you become for the recycling company, which can translate into financial benefits for the district.
- Renegotiate the trash hauling contract. There will be less garbage to be picked up and that should reflect on the cost.
- Paper milk cartons are not easily recycled since they are a coated paper fiber and very few recycling plants can handle this type of material.
- Coated paper milk cartons going into landfills do not easily decompose because ideal composting conditions do not exist. This is true for most materials in landfills.
- Determine what education/promotion is needed to reinforce recycling message to students, staff and faculty.
- Communicate with the recycling company on how to make the program even more successful.
- Some companies have compactors available for lease or purchase which would make the material more valuable.
- Be proud of helping the environment and the school district.
- Let the local media, parents and community know about your efforts.
- Share information about your program with other districts in your community and your state School Nutrition Association.
- Local, regional or state government recycling programs and state recycling associations may have grant funds and/or technical assistance to help make your program a success.

<sup>1</sup>Killinger, Jennifer. "Information Sheet" American Chemistry Council. March 2007 <[http://www.americanchemistry.com/s\\_plastics/sec\\_content.asp?CID=1102&DID=5007](http://www.americanchemistry.com/s_plastics/sec_content.asp?CID=1102&DID=5007)>



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