



Support SB20-055:  
Incentivize the Development of Recycling  
End Markets

*Sponsors: Senators Kevin Priola and Tammy Story, Representatives Lisa Cutter and Jeni Arndt*

**THE PROBLEM** Colorado needs more local businesses to use our recyclable materials to make new products. Currently communities pay high costs for transporting recyclable materials out of state, representing a lost economic opportunity for Colorado.

**Colorado lacks local recycling markets for most major recyclable materials.** Nearly all of the paper, metal, and plastic that Colorado collects for recycling are shipped out of state, or even out of the country, before being made into new products.

**The costs of transporting recyclable materials are a significant burden on local communities,** especially in rural areas, and are one of the biggest obstacles to expanding recycling programs around the state.<sup>1</sup>

**Our lack of recycling is a lost economic opportunity.** Each year, Colorado buries nearly \$265 million worth of recyclable material including aluminum, cardboard, paper, glass, and plastic in our landfills.<sup>2</sup> That material could be recycled here in Colorado, creating local jobs and strengthening local economies. Recycling, reuse and remanufacturing already contribute \$8.7 billion to the Colorado economy annually,<sup>3</sup> yet there is so much more economic opportunity we can realize by investing in more recycling opportunities and businesses here in Colorado.

**Colorado has one of the lowest recycling rates in the country.** We only recycled and composted 17% of our municipal solid waste in 2018 – less than half the national average of 35% and far below our statewide goal of 28% by 2021.<sup>4</sup>

**We are one of the most wasteful states in the country.** Colorado generated over 15,900,000 tons of waste in 2018, up 14% from 2017.<sup>5</sup> More than 95% of Colorado's waste could be diverted from landfills and could serve as the feedstock for businesses in the state to make new products.<sup>6</sup>

#### WHAT IS A RECYCLING END MARKET?

End markets are manufacturers that use your recyclables to make new products. These end markets can include paper mills, metal smelters, glass factories, and plastics fabrication plants.

<sup>1</sup> CDPHE, 2016. Colorado Integrated Solid Waste and Materials Management Plan. Accessed at [www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/integrated-solid-waste-materials-mgmt-plan](http://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/integrated-solid-waste-materials-mgmt-plan).

<sup>2</sup> CDPHE, 2016.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, 2019. 2018 Recycling Data Totals. <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/2018-colorado-recycling-totals>. EPA, 2019. National Overview: Facts and Figures on Materials, Wastes and Recycling. Accessed at <https://www.epa.gov/facts-and-figures-about-materials-waste-and-recycling/national-overview-facts-and-figures-materials>. Department of Public Health and Environment, 2018. Annual solid waste diversion totals 2007-2017. Accessed at [www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/swreports](http://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/swreports). CDPHE, 2016.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> Ibid