

Recycling: Myths vs. Facts

MYTH

Recycling in Canada is in crisis.

FACT

In thousands of communities nationwide, including those with Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), recycling continues to be collected on a regular basis. Every day, thousands of bales of paper, plastic, and metal are generated at recycling facilities and sent to domestic and foreign buyers. Only a limited number of communities are sending some plastics or paper to landfills or waste-to-energy facilities.

MYTH

China has stopped accepting any recyclables or scrap from Canada.

FACT

Although China has imposed import bans on certain recycled paper and plastic, Canada continues to export a lot of recyclables and scrap to China. **In 2018, around 1/4 of all Canada's exported paper went to China.**

MYTH

The contamination rate for recyclables in Canada is 25%.

FACT

Contamination rates vary widely by community. **According to information gathered by the CBC, contamination rates can range from 3-26%.** Contamination is a problem. Local governments that have educated residents about how to recycle right have seen reductions in contamination rates.

MYTH

Recycling isn't worth the effort anymore.

FACT

The market for materials may vary, but recycling has major benefits. These include extending landfill life so new ones don't need to be built, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, saving energy, reducing water use, protecting natural resources, and supporting thousands of local jobs.

MYTH

No one knows how to fix the challenges facing recycling.

FACT

Though it's not simple, solutions are being implemented. Public education and enforcement of local rules motivate people to recycle right. Recycling facilities are updating equipment and adding new technologies to keep up with changing material streams. New facilities are opening and existing ones are expanding, providing more demand for recyclables. Organizations are considering redesign, reuse and repair to address hard-to-recycle items.