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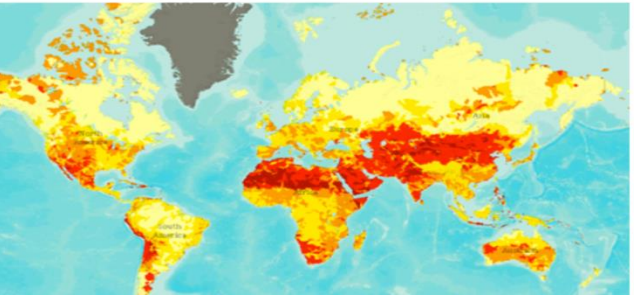
RAA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

When done properly, recycling can be **the most important action society can do** to simultaneously improve the environment, reduce climate change, and reduce waste from going into oceans – while simultaneously improving manufacturing and the economy.













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Kristen Bell, actress and RAA spokesperson

BUT U.S. RECYCLING DOESN'T

WORK WELL BECAUSE IT HAS A

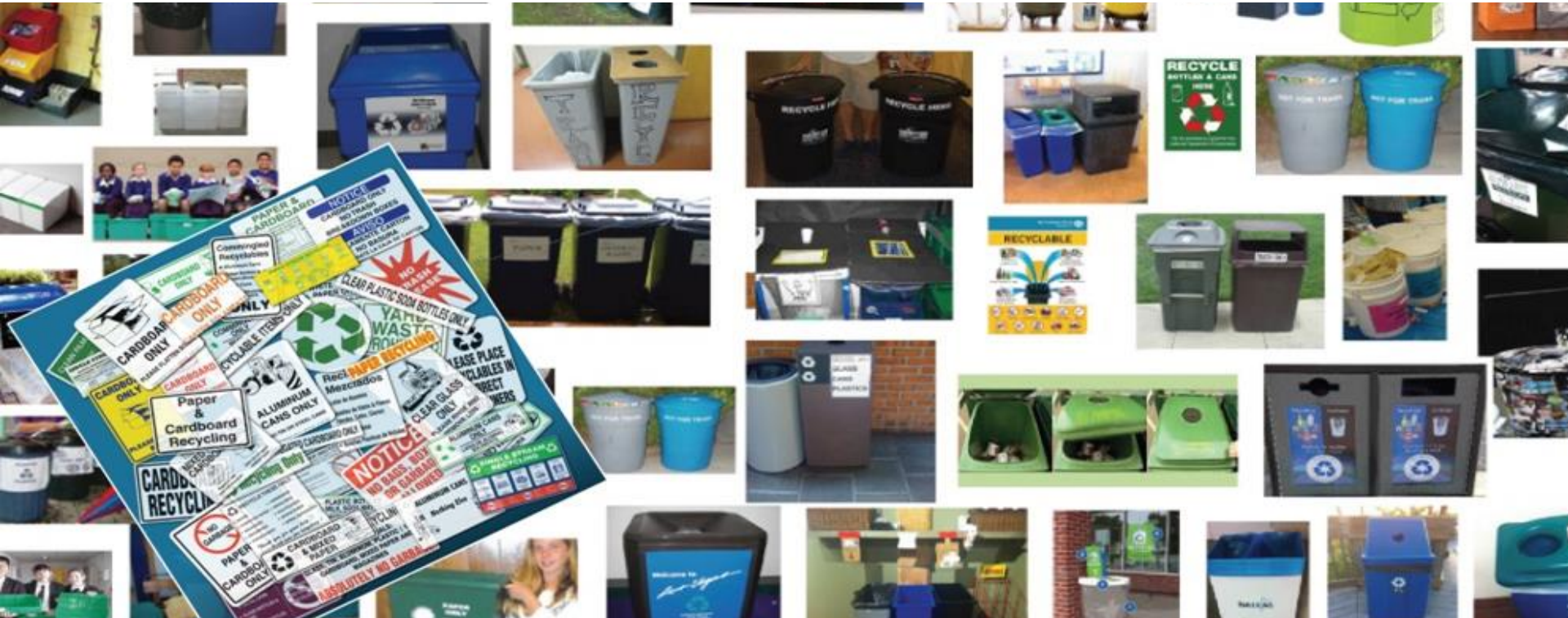
CONFUSION

~~CONTAMINATION~~ ISSUE.

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For 60+ years, confusing, ineffective and inconsistent labels on recycling bins throughout society **have** caused public confusion, apathy and even skepticism about recycling, which leads to millions of tons of garbage being thrown in recycling bins.





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There are literally hundreds of thousands of different looking labels on bins throughout the U.S. and in some instances, recycling bins have become a brand war space, adding more confusion.

Even when the recycling rules are the same, the labels on bins look entirely different.

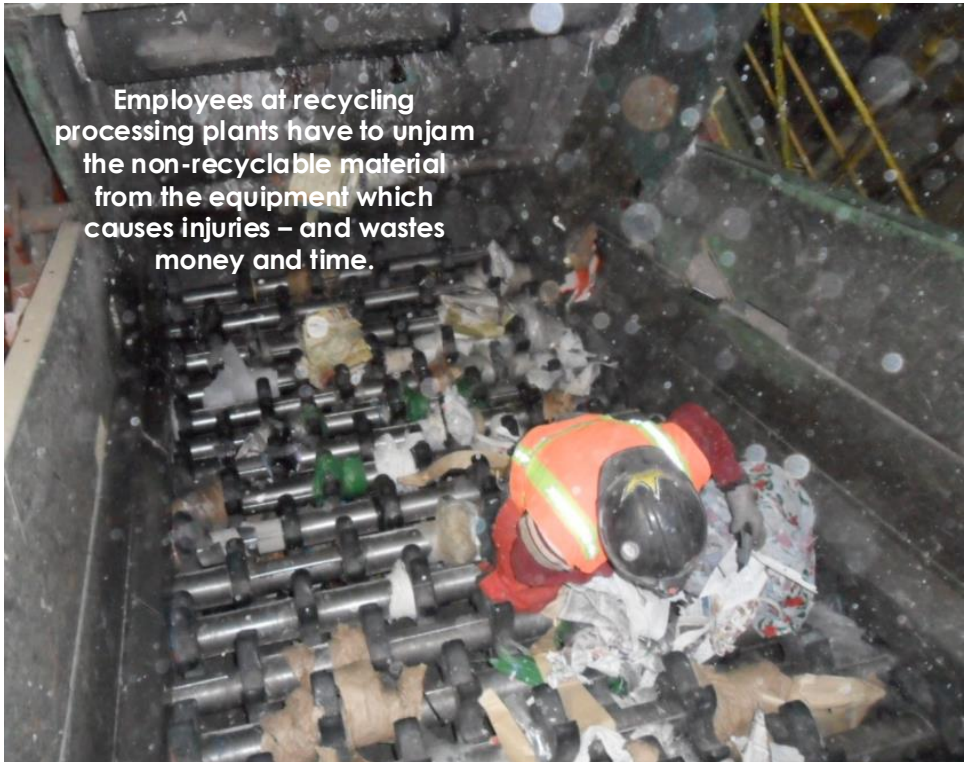
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As a result of confusion and mistakes at the bin, the recycling is filled with trash -- and that contamination destroys the quality, quantity and economics of recycling and makes the recycled commodities undesirable for manufacturers to reuse, at scale.



In the U.S., more than *25% of the items thrown in the recycling bin shouldn't be in there, which destroy the economics and efficacy of recycling. (EPA 2022)



Employees at recycling processing plants have to unjam the non-recyclable material from the equipment which causes injuries – and wastes money and time.

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Ineffective recycling is a waste for businesses and government operations: If people aren't recycling or composting properly at the bin it can cost a significant expense to operate a failing recycling program in their buildings.

The cost of confusion at the bin is extremely expensive:

- Cost of bins.
- Cost of labels.
- Cost of education.
- Cost of hauling recycling.
- Cost of paying contamination fees.
- Cost of paying landfill fees for disposing the nonusuable contaminated recycling in the landfill.
- Cost of time wasted with employees trying make the failed recycling program work.
- Cost to the environment.



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Displaying the **'society-wide' standardized labeling on recycling, compost, and trash bins** helps end the public confusion and costly contamination at the source.



Note: There is a standardized label created for **EVERY** type of unique recycling and compost program in the U.S.



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Volunteer RAA spokesperson and Grammy-Winning Musician – Alanis Morrissette

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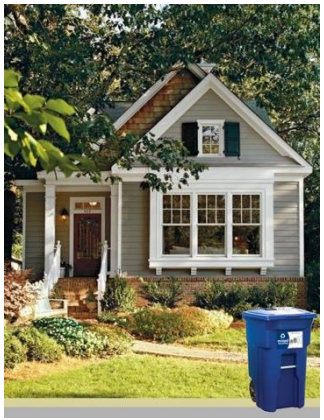
The society-wide standardized labels for recycling bins are the #1 solution to fix U.S. recycling and make it thrive.



There are now more than **12 million** standardized labels displayed on recycling and compost bins throughout the U.S.

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The society-wide standardized labels are for residential carts, as well as public space bins and dumpsters.



For household recycling carts.



RAA provides artwork for matching in-home magnets, door hangers, and mailers to reinforce the standardized label messaging,

Door hangers



Refrigerator magnets



Online and Postal Mailers



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Case Study - Miami Beach: Piloted the Standardized Labels in Multi-Family Condo Complexes that Represented Every Socio-Economic Level



MIAMIBEACH

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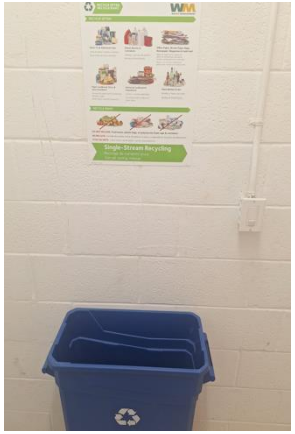
We performed the initial assessment to identify the existing recycling program issues.

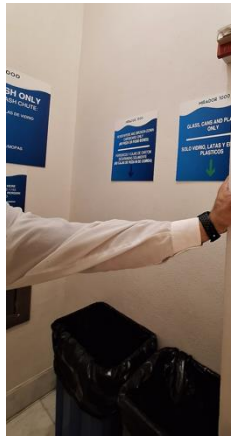
Here are just a couple of the challenges that were identified:

- Recycling and trash dumpsters looked identical which confused the custodial staff -- and
- the recycling signage for residents were confusing and looked entirely different from bin to bin and building to building, which confused the residents.







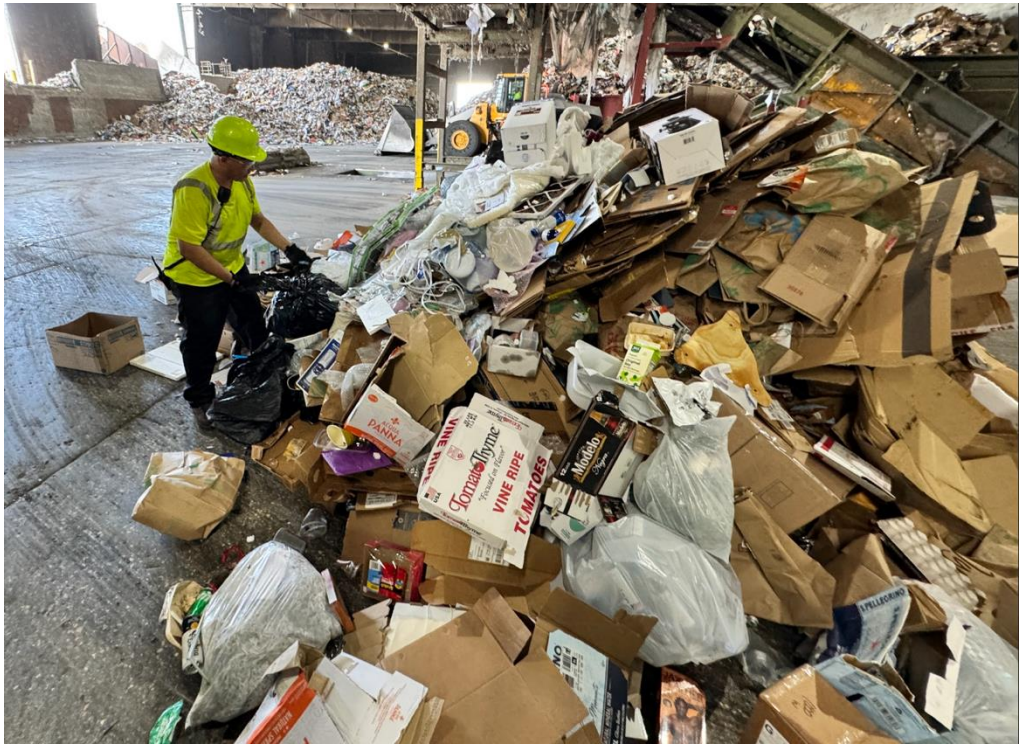


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As a result, contamination levels were very high at each of the properties. This pile from the pilot properties was dumped in the MRF and audited by the recycling hauler.

Pre-pilot contamination level from the participating condos:

54.1%



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The society-wide standardized labels were then installed on all recycling and trash dumpsters and in all the resident trash and recycling rooms on each floor in each building.

STANDARDIZED LABELS INSTALLED ON DUMPSTERS FOR STAFF: RAA installed the standardized labels on all the recycling and trash dumpsters at each property. Note WM would only allow the size labels on their dumpsters.

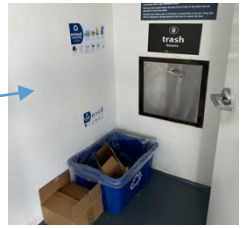








STANDARDIZED LABEL INSTALLATIONS FOR RESIDENTS: RAA have installed the standardized labels inside the properties where there is a dedicated residential recycling area.



EDUCATION MATERIALS: RAA has provided digital education and communication materials to all the participating properties. We don't know if the materials were ever shared with residents.



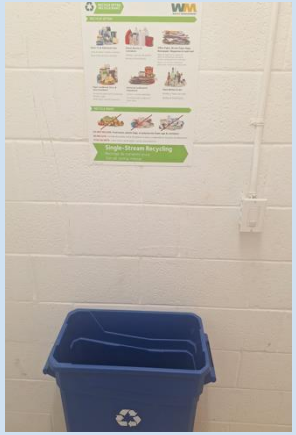
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Recycling and Trash Chute Rooms: Before and After

Before

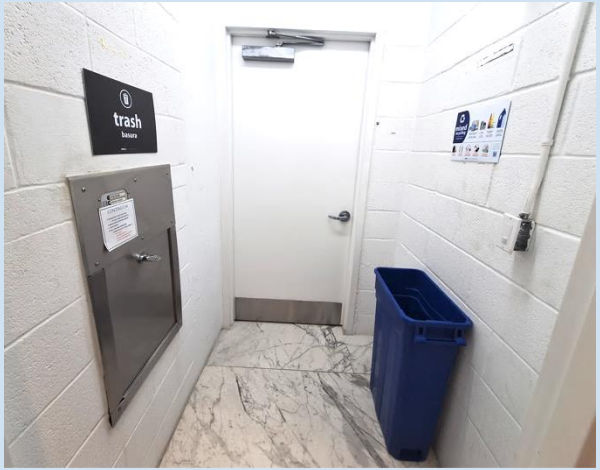
These two labels were in the same trash/recycling room on each floor. The left sign is over the trash chute and the other recycling sign is over the recycling bin. Totally confusing.





After

This is what the same room looks like with the standardized labels displayed.



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Case Study: Miami Beach

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Audit from post standardized label installation: These are photos of recycling dumpsters from buildings that participated in the pilot.









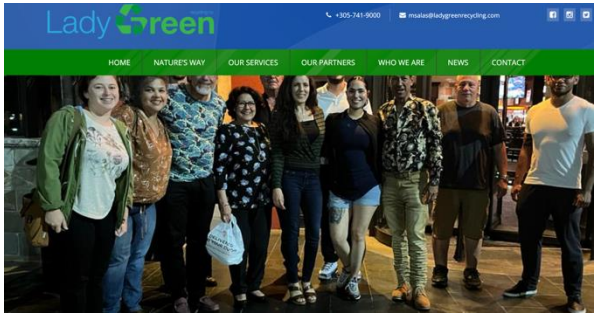


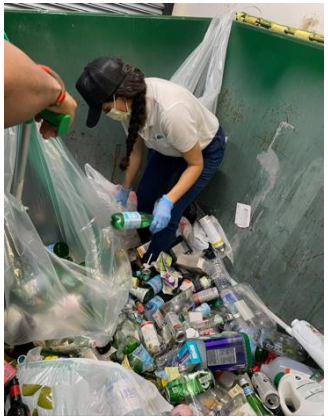


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Post Label Audit: A third-party audit was conducted by Lady Green Recycling









Final Audit Performed by Lady Green Recycling (Miami) – JUNE 2025

Lady Green Recycling only audited the participating properties that have installed the standardized labels in recycling and trash chute rooms on each floor.

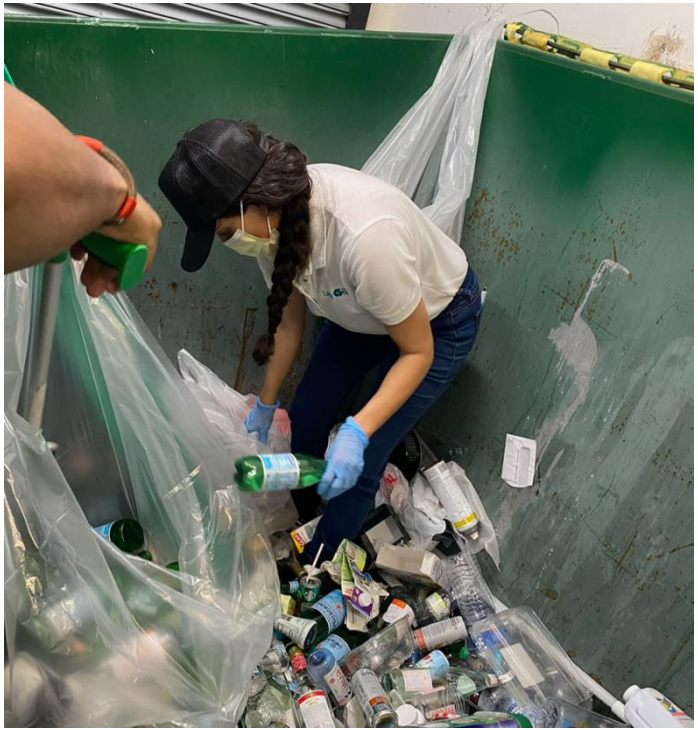
- Continuum
- Island Terrace
- KW Mirador
- Southgate – Lady Green's note from the audit: Southgate's recycling dumpster remains locked at all times and therefore the custodial staff throws their recyclables (except for cardboard) in the trash dumpster.

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Miami Beach Pilot Results after the society-wide standardized labels were installed!

Post-pilot contamination level from the participating condos:

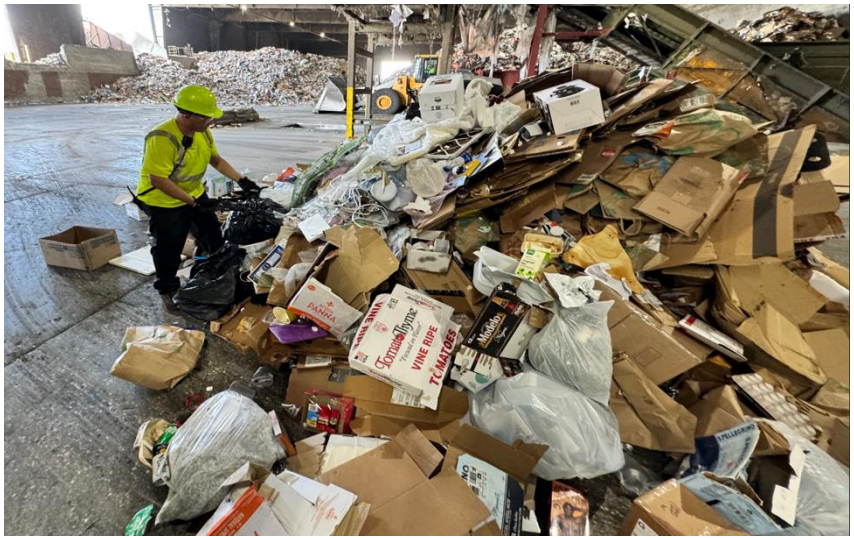
5%

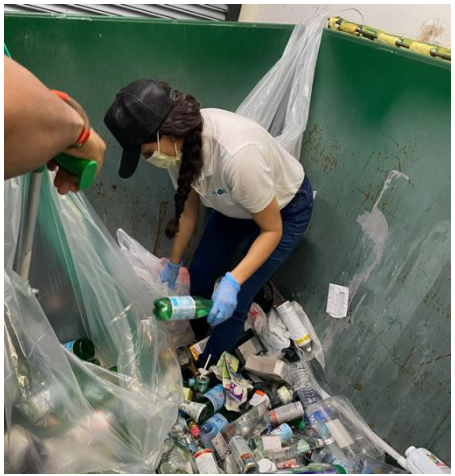


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Miami Beach Findings: The contamination was dramatically reduced in the buildings that participated in the society-wide standardized label pilot study.

Contamination levels before: 54.1%. to **Contamination levels after: 5%**





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Case Study – National Parks: A pilot study at three of the most iconic National Parks in the U.S.



After implementing the standardized labels Denali, Grand Teton, and Yosemite each had a ***100% increase in their recycling levels and in Denali and Grand Teton, their contamination levels decreased to less than 3% and in "Yosemite's contamination levels decreased from approximately 48% to less than 8%."** – *Yosemite's contamination data was provided by Todd Storti, Mariposa County's Recycling and Compost Coordinator 2018*

*100% increase of recycling levels were provided by Leave No Trace study 2018

A testimonial letter has been provided to you from the lead sustainability director of the NPS, Shawn Norton,

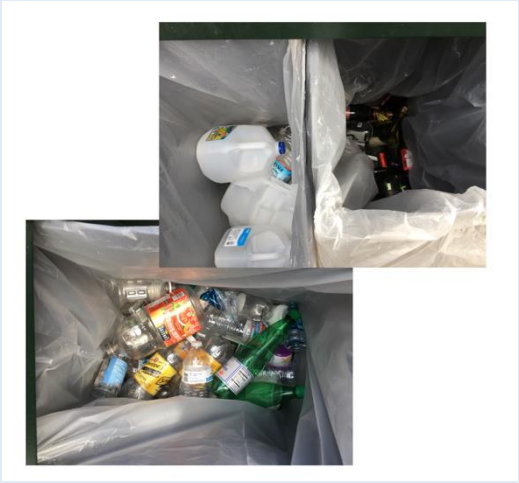
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As a result of the successful pilot study, the standardized labels are now being expanded into National Parks across the U.S.



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There is **almost zero contamination** in the recycling bins when the society-wide standardized labels are displayed on bins at the participating National Parks!
(Image above of inside of the bins in Denali)

Case Study – National Parks

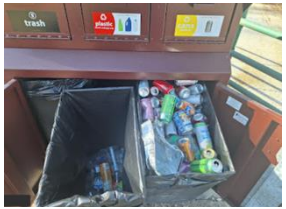
20 More National Parks: Thanks to a recent National Park Foundation grant, we are helping install the standardized labels throughout 20 additional national parks.

GRANT PROJECT: To help people recycle more and recycle right, approximately 17,000 society-wide standardized labels have been installed in 20 National Parks, including visitor areas, and employee areas. Concessionaires are also beginning to instdl the standardized labels labels, as well.

IMPACT: Recycling levels are increasing and contamination levels are often undetectable when the society-wide standardized labels are displayed on bins, dumpsters, and receptacles.

There is almost zero contamination in the recycling bins at each park.







And only trash is in the trash bin.



TESTIMONIALS *"Big Bend NP has seen an increase in visitor recycling thanks to the Recycle Across America standardized labels on our Bear Saver recycling bins. The use of standardized labels has helped significantly, making it simple for people to know what is recyclable and what is not, eliminating one of the most complicated parts of the process (through standardization),"* Rick Gupman, Big Bend National Park

"I have been informed that the standardized labels have resulted in exponential improvements in reducing the amount of contamination in the recycle waste stream," Dustin Kay, Zion National Park

"Our recycling program was discontinued due to high levels of contamination. Since the standardized labels have been installed, our contamination decreased so much that our recycling processor will accept our materials again." *Lara Hannon, National Mall and Monuments (NAMA)*

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The society-wide standardized labels were recently installed at the National Mall and National Monuments

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Case Study – National Mall and National Monuments: The National Mall and Monuments' recycling program was out of commission for years because the recycling bins were too contaminated with garbage. But now with the standardized labels on the bins, their recycling program is functional again because the contamination has been reduced so significantly.





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Case Study - Los Angeles International Airport(LAX):

We recently installed the society-wide standardized labels throughout LAX, including in concession areas. The improvements In their recycling bins were seen immediately, during installation.







Improvements were witnessed instantly, even as we were installing the standardized labels.



The standardized labels were also installed on the LAX food-service bins.

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The society-wide standardized labels are being implemented in dozens of airports throughout the U.S.



LAX

Hartsfield-Jackson
Atlanta International Airport

ORLANDO
INTERNATIONAL
AIRPORT MCO

LGA LAGUARDIA AIRPORT

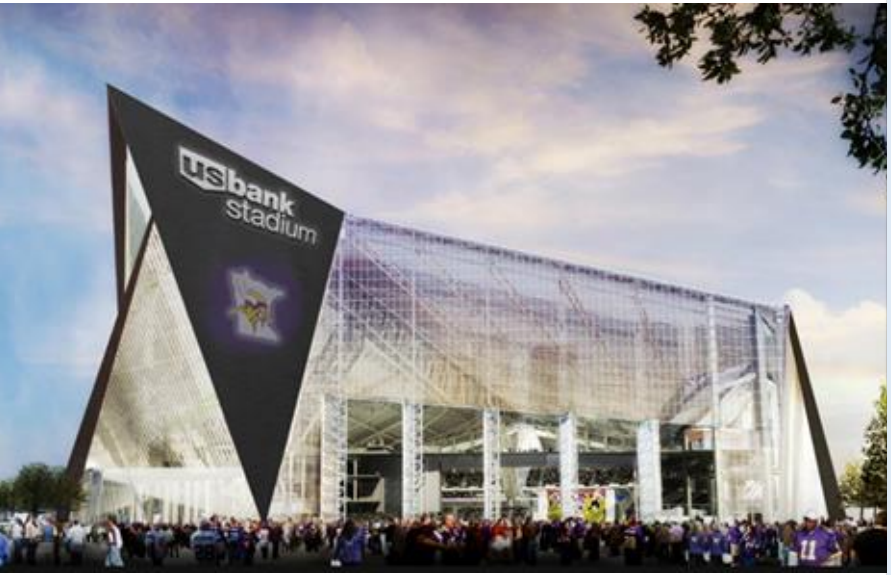
Minneapolis Saint Paul
INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
msp

JFK JOHN F. KENNEDY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Recycling levels at participating airports have increased and contamination levels have measurably decreased.

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Case Study - US Bank Stadium -- 2018 NFL Super Bowl – 2019 NCAA Final Four – A Powerful Story



A testimonial and impact letter has been provided to you about this.

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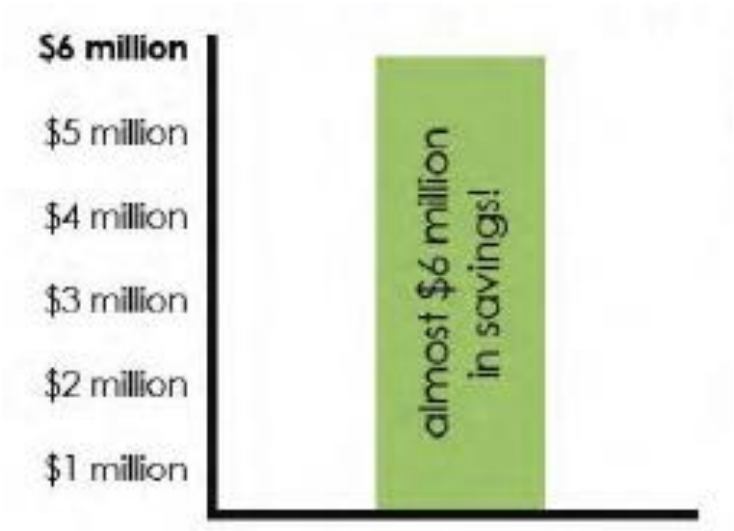
Since opening, US Bank Stadium's recycling/diversion levels had been 24% and very contaminated.

In the winter of 2017, US Bank Stadium began displaying the society-wide standardized labels on all of their recycling, compost, and trash bins. Nothing else was changed … just the labels were changed. Immediately **after the standardized labels were installed US Bank Stadium's recycling levels increased to as high as 82% … and the contamination levels became almost undetectable. They started saving $40,000/year in trash hauling fees.**

In 2018, US Bank Stadium hosted the first Zero Waste Super Bowl in history, reaching 91% diversion. They attribute much of the success to the society-wide standardized labels on their bins.

In 2019, Coca Cola installed their own recycling labels on the US Bank Stadium bins for the NCAA Final Four … as a result, the stadium's recycling and compost bins were so contaminated it was all sent to the incinerator with the trash. After the Final Four Games were finished, US Bank Stadium removed the Coca Cola recycling labels, and resumed using the society-wide standardized labels on their bins and experienced a successful recycling and compost program ever since,

Case Study – Las Vegas K-12 Schools: The standardized labels on bins helps students and staff recycle properly and helps schools and universities save money!





After implementing the standardized labels Clark County School District (Las Vegas, NV) **saved $6 million dollars (net savings) in trash hauling fees** because their recycling levels increased so much. Orange County Public School District in Orlando, FL **saved $1.3 million.**

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Case Study – Rhode Island: R.I. is the first state to begin implementing the standardized labels statewide.



Learning from Rhode Island

Rhode Island processes all recycling in the state at one facility, meaning the recycling rules are standardized across the entire state. In theory, this should mean that people throughout the state know how to recycle properly wherever they go and therefore there shouldn't be any mistakes (aka contamination) in the recycling bins. But that is not the case.

But inconsistent labeling on recycling bins throughout the state created confusion for people. As a result, the contamination levels have been extremely high, making the state's recycling program inefficient and contamination fees expensive for municipalities and businesses.

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After implementing the society-wide standardized recycling labels on bins across schools, public spaces, and government facilities, the state of Rhode Island experienced **an immediate 17% reduction in rejected loads at its recycling MRF.**

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Rhode Island – SWANA Gold Award



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For years, the city of Providence has been paying $2 million a year in contamination fees because their recycling has been severely contaminated.

In January 2026, Providence began displaying the society-wide standardized labels on their residential recycling carts and trash bins. By November 2026, we will have a report to show how the recycling and contamination level in Providence have improved.

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Case Study – Providence,

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Since starting the standardized bin label mission in 2008, we have found that the efficacy of the society-wide standardized labels on recycling bins override the confusing and often misleading recycling information on packaging. People follow the instructions on the standardized labels on the bins versus the recyclability claims on the packaging.



Systemic Solution: Recycling is a system that requires the system at in order for it to work.



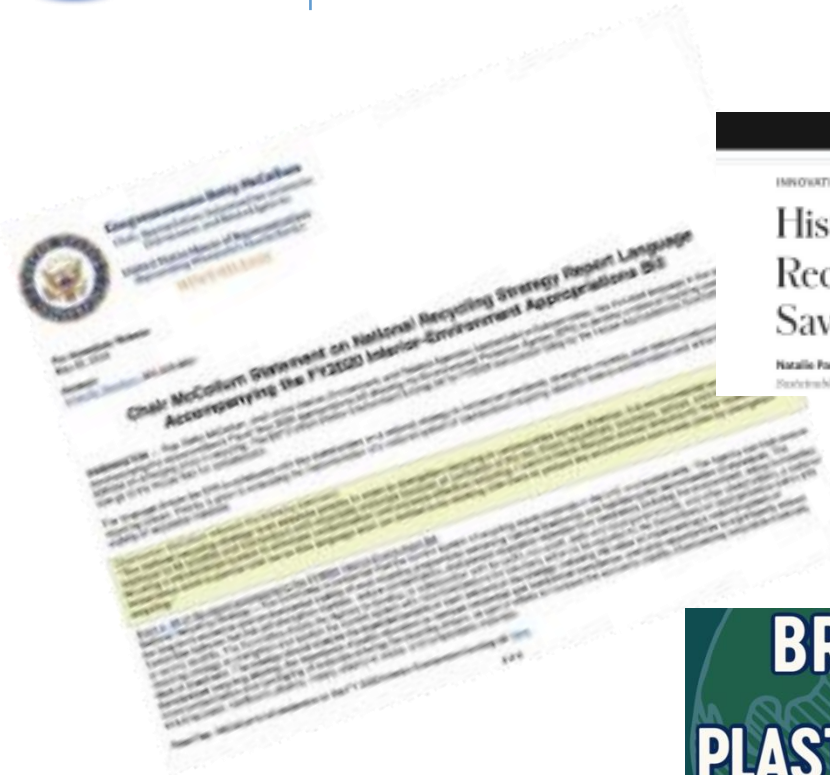




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Our goal is to have this solution legislated following the same logic and path as society-wide standardized road signs.

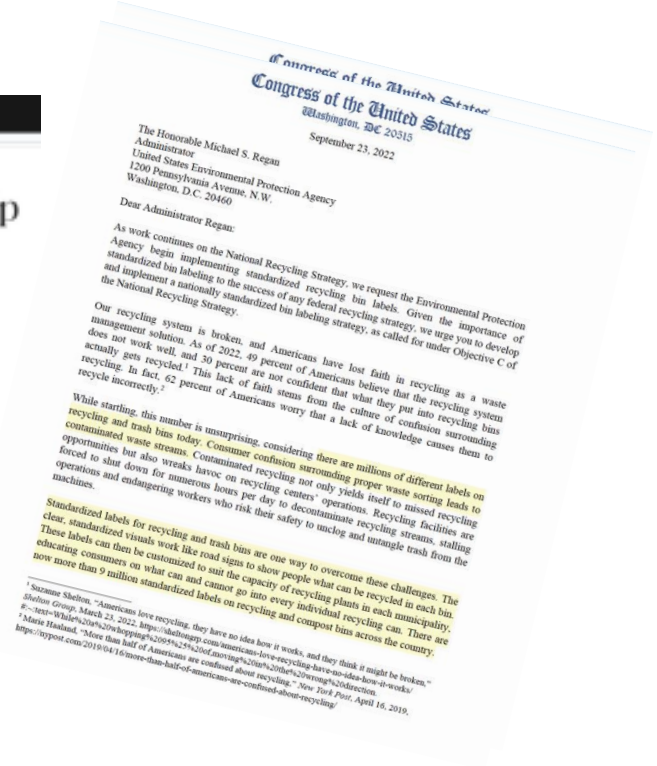

Chair McCollum Statement on National Recycling Strategy Report Language Accompanying the FY2020 Interior-Environment Appropriations Bill


Forbes

INNOVATION • SCIENCE • EDITORS' PICK

Historic U.S. Bill To Clean Up Recycling At The Bin And Save Billions

Natalie Fee Forbes Former Contributor


Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 23, 2022

The Honorable Michael S. Regan
Administrator
United States Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Administrator Regan:

As work continues on the National Recycling Strategy, we request the Environmental Protection Agency begin implementing standardized recycling bin labels. Given the importance of standardized bin labeling to the success of any federal recycling strategy, we urge you to develop and implement a nationally standardized bin labeling strategy, as called for under Objective C of the National Recycling Strategy.

Our recycling system is broken, and Americans have lost faith in recycling as a waste management solution. As of 2022, 49 percent of Americans believe that the recycling system does not work well, and 30 percent are not confident that what they put into recycling bins actually gets recycled.[1] This lack of faith stems from the culture of confusion surrounding recycling. In fact, 62 percent of Americans worry that a lack of knowledge causes them to recycle incorrectly.[2]

While startling, this number is unsurprising, considering there are millions of different labels on recycling and trash bins today. Consumer confusion surrounding proper waste sorting leads to contaminated waste streams. Contaminated recycling not only yields itself to missed recycling opportunities but also wreaks havoc on recycling centers' operations. Recycling facilities are forced to shut down for numerous hours per day to decontaminate recycling streams, stalling operations and endangering workers who risk their safety to unclog and untangle trash from the machines.

Standardized labels for recycling and trash bins are one way to overcome these challenges. The clear, standardized visuals work like road signs to show people what can be recycled in each bin. These labels can then be customized to suit the capacity of recycling plants in each municipality, educating consumers on what can and cannot go into every individual recycling can. There are now more than 9 million standardized labels on recycling and compost bins across the country.

[1] Suzanne Shelton, "Americans love recycling, they have no idea how it works, and they think it might be broken," *Shelton Group*, March 23, 2022, https://sheltongrp.com/americans-love-recycling-have-no-idea-how-it-works/#:~text=While%20the%20majority%2055%25%20of,moving%20the%20through%20direction.

[2] Marie Haaland, "More than half of Americans are confused about recycling," *New York Post*, April 16, 2019, https://nypost.com/2019/04/16/more-than-half-of-americans-are-confused-about-recycling/

BREAK FREE FROM PLASTIC POLLUTION ACT

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We often take society-wide standardizations for granted in our lives. What would our lives look like without them?



Standardized road signs



Standardized time



Standardized nutritional labels



Standardized medical equipment

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Analogy: If standardized road signs hadn't been legislated yet in the U.S., **would you be willing to be part of the movement and start displaying the society-wide standardized road signs to help people drive properly**?











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recycle across america
let's recycle right!

We hope that you will join this critical mission to help people recycle properly wherever they go, so that recycling, closed-loop manufacturing, and related environmental progress can finally begin to thrive.



There is a society-wide standardized label designed for literally every unique recycling and compost program in the U.S.

For more details and to see standardized labels that work for your program, visit:
https://www.recycleacrossamerica.org/standardized-labels

Thank you!

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