



Don't Let Your Good Recycling Go to Waste

Theresa Evans, Recycling Specialist

Recycling contamination occurs when the wrong items are placed in recycling bins. Contamination damages sorting machinery at the material recovery facility and it lowers the resale value of the recyclable materials. If there is too much contamination, it can render an entire load of recyclables as trash. Don't let your good recycling efforts, literally, go to waste. Follow the Onondaga County recycling rules and only put approved items in the recycling bin. Check out the recycling rules here: www.tinyurl.com/RecycleRules101

Do NOT Recycle:

- Medical waste such as syringes, gloves and facemasks.
- Brake drums, rotors. Only metal cans go in the blue bin.
- Hoses, cords and other tangles that wind around equipment.
- Large rigid plastics such as car seats, laundry baskets. Only plastic bottles, jugs, jars or wide-mouth dairy tubs go in the blue bin.

Recycle

(just not in the blue bin):

- Textiles. Old clothing and other textiles can be recycled year-round. Visit www.tinyurl.com/cny-textiles for locations.
- Yard waste and scrap wood. Compost them at OCRRA's Amboy or Jamesville Compost Site. Details available at www.OCRRA.org.

Finally, all recyclables should be placed loose into the recycling bin or cart, and should not be in plastic bags. If you cannot remember if an item is recyclable, and you do not have time to look it up online, then remember this phrase, "when in doubt, throw it out!" It is better to dispose of an item that you are unsure about in the trash, where it will then be converted into electricity that will power houses throughout the community, than it is to contaminate the recycling.

Thanks for doing your part to prevent recycling contamination and help save the world a little each day.

Theresa Evans can be reached at tevens@ocrra.org.



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Explore year-round options for shredding confidential documents.



PROGRAM CHANGESPG 3

July curbside battery collection ends; OCRRA adds year-round drop off locations.



COMPOST / MULCHPG 4-5

Boost your garden and landscape with OCRRA's locally-made garden products.



TEXTILE RECYCLINGPG 5

Clothing can be recycled year-round, just not in the blue bin.



TOXICS DISPOSALPG 5

Hazardous household products should never be thrown away.

Rock Cut Road Transfer Station Opens to Commercial Customers

Cristina Alburnio, Agency Engineer



Photo Credit: Erica Hasenjäger Photography, Jamesville, 2020.

The recently renovated Rock Cut Road Transfer Station opened to commercial customers in June. Residential customers will continue to use the Ley Creek Transfer Station in Liverpool until further notice. Please bear with us as we work to provide an improved option for residential customers in the future.

In January 2019, OCRRA closed its Rock Cut Road Transfer Station to modify it to conform with updated New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) regulations. The new regulations require certain transfer operations to take place indoors to reduce litter, protect the quality of stormwater runoff, and, in other ways, protect the environment. OCRRA's commercial transfer station must be able to comply with these regulations when its permit expires in 2024. The Rock Cut Transfer Station

has been transformed in preparation for that upcoming date. The site, located on Rock Cut Road in Jamesville, now only serves commercial customers. **All residential customers will continue to use the Ley Creek Transfer Station in Liverpool until further notice.** OCRRA is studying options to better serve these customers at an alternate location, however, this effort is in its infancy stages. In June and July 2020, OCRRA began serving all commercial customers at the transformed Rock Cut Road Transfer Station.

Commercial customers now use automated scales and four different buildings for indoor dumping. With all commercial traffic being diverted away from the Ley Creek Transfer Station, our residential customers have begun feeling less crowded there.

OCRRA deftly coordinated the efforts of many contractors at the Rock Cut Road Transfer Station, while investing \$12 million into the facility to meet modern needs.

During construction, there was efficient materials management that any dedicated recycler would be proud of!

- 49 large **concrete blocks**, previously used as part of a retaining wall, were reused to delineate an employee parking area.
- 1,000 tons of reinforced **concrete** were recovered during demolition and recycled at a local quarry.
- 3,900 tons of **asphalt pavement** were removed and recycled at a local quarry.
- 60 tons of **steel** was segregated during demolition and recycled by a local scrap metal processor.
- 130 cubic yards of **asphalt millings** were reused on-site for an employee parking area.

- 4,000 cubic yards of **soil** was reused for fill on-site, requiring no transport or disposal.

OCRRA is thankful for the support of Onondaga County's Department of Emergency Management and the countless members of the hard working construction crew who were able to safely complete the Rock Cut Road Transfer Station modification project in light of COVID-19's challenging impacts.

Cristina Alburnio can be reached at calburnio@ocrra.org.

DOCUMENT SHREDDING OPTIONS

While COVID-19 necessitated cancelling the July Shred-o-Rama at the NYS Fairgrounds, there are still many options to shred confidential documents, year-round.

Contact **Simple Shred** or the nearest **Office Max, Staples** or **UPS Store** for pricing and material preparation instructions. Residents with large volumes of material or businesses, may also contact:

- **Simple Shred; (315) 684-9900**
- **Confidata; (800) 627-4733**
- **Iron Mountain; (315) 463-6919**
- **Proshred; (315) 251-2936**
- **Shred-it; (315) 741-3826**

To be notified of the next Shred-o-Rama event, sign up for OCRRA's email list. Visit www.OCRRA.org. Scroll to the green area at the bottom of the page and enter your email address.

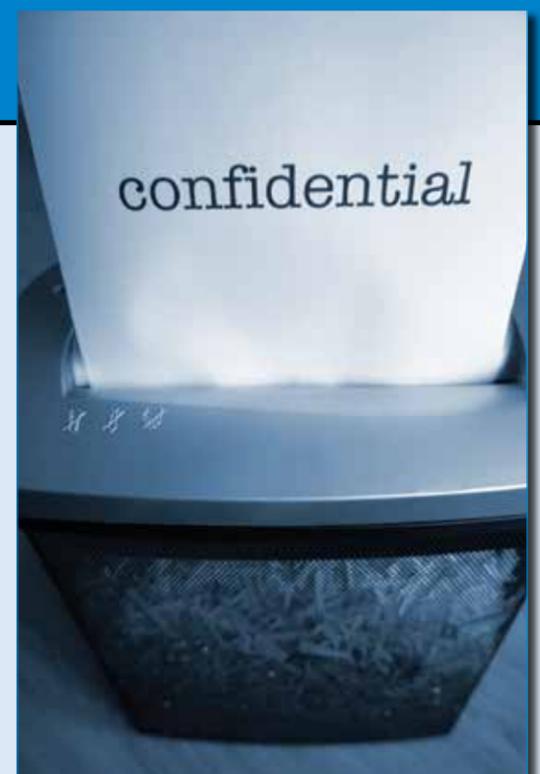


Photo Credit: iStock.com, 2010.

FACT: Rock Cut Road Transfer Station serves commercial customers only. Residents continue to use Ley Creek until further notice.

OCRRA's Battery Collection Program Evolves

July curbside collection ends, new drop off locations added

Andrew Radin, Director of Recycling and Waste Reduction

After a quarter century, OCRRA is making some changes to its household battery collection program. Nearly 100% of the household batteries are collected via a convenient network of drop-off stations, including:

- All Onondaga County **Wegmans** entryways
- **Green Hills**, bottle return shed (Nedrow)
- OCRRA's **Ley Creek Transfer Station** (Salina)

A very small percentage of batteries are actually collected during the July program. The many resources devoted to the July collection are better utilized elsewhere, as more batteries – and more types of batteries – are

collected in drop boxes year-round than in July.

As such, yellow battery bags will no longer be mailed to residents, resulting in significant waste reduction. In the wake of this change, OCRRA welcomes three new battery drop off locations:

- **Wrightway Hardware** (9236 Oswego Rd., Baldwinsville)
- **Nightingale Tully Lakes True Value Hardware** (6 Elm St., Tully)
- **Nightingale Mills True Value Hardware** (4086 South St., Marcellus)

With these three additional drop off locations, the Agency now has 13 battery recovery points in Onondaga County. There are also numerous

locations throughout our area that only accept rechargeable batteries; find a location near you at: www.call2recycle.org/locator.

For more than 25 years, OCRRA has urged residents to keep unwanted household batteries out of the trash. The result: more than 100,000 pounds of alkaline, rechargeable and button batteries are recovered each year. They are either recycled or safely disposed; one of the few such programs anywhere in the country. As a result of these efforts, Onondaga County residents recycle more rechargeable batteries per capita than any other large community in New York State. This feat earned our community a Sustainability



Photo Credit: iStock.com, 2012.

The July alkaline battery collection program that utilized yellow battery bags has ended. Residents are invited to drop their batteries off at 13 convenient locations throughout our community. This year-round drop off program accepts not only alkaline batteries, but rechargeable and button batteries. No special bag is required for drop off.

Award from Call2Recycle, a product stewardship organization that works to protect the environment through responsible end-of-life management of batteries.

OCRRA reminds residents to sort batteries into three categories prior to drop off: 1) alkalines, 2) rechargeables, and 3) button batteries. Visit www.tinyurl.com/OCRRAbatteryInfo to learn how to tell the difference between battery types.

This drop off program is for household batteries only.

Business batteries are not accepted.

Visit www.tinyurl.com/BizBattery for information about proper disposal of batteries generated by businesses.

OCRRA thanks all its retail partners:

Wegmans, Green Hills, Nightingale Hardware and Wrightway Hardware, that all help make Onondaga County an environmental leader in battery recovery.

Andrew Radin can be reached at aradin@ocrra.org.



Recycling Rhoda

Propane Tanks

Dear Rhoda,

Last year's barbeque season left me with some old propane tanks – you know the 20-pound kind that screw onto the grill – how do I get rid of them? Can they be recycled?

– Chillin' & Grillin' in Geddes

Dear Chillin',

Here's the grill drill: First, reuse them by having them refilled. You can refill or exchange empty outdoor grill tanks (the large, 20-pound variety only) at any location that sells them. They can be refilled and reused again and again!

If you can't reuse your grill and other large propane tanks, no pressure (pun intended), but don't throw them in the trash nor the blue bin.

Large propane tanks should NEVER go in your trash or blue bin. The small camping tanks (one-pound) shouldn't go in the blue bin either,

but those little guys CAN go in the trash, if they are EMPTY. All contents need to be used up before tossing one of these smaller, one-pound tanks into the trash, in order to avoid potential ignition and bodily harm. OCRRA's Ley Creek Transfer Station will also accept empty one-pound propane tanks for disposal. Ultimately, their metal casings will be collected and recycled at the Waste-to-Energy Facility, when they are placed in your normal household garbage.

Some local businesses accept large propane tanks for recycling. Visit www.OCRRA.org and enter "propane tank" in the "How do I get rid of..." search section at the top center of the page. The resulting entry will give you a list of locations that recycle propane tanks throughout the community.

Now, you're cookin' with gas!

Recycling Rhoda

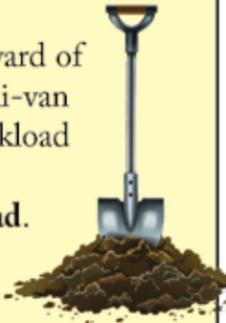
In Search of Compost or Mulch? Finding it is as easy as 1-2-3!

When undertaking summer garden and landscape projects knowing where and how to acquire OCRRA's mulch and STA-certified compost is crucial to growing the best vegetables and creating the most beautiful landscapes in the neighborhood. To join the company of thousands of local residents and landscapers that rely on OCRRA's high-quality mulch and compost for their gardens and lawns each year, consider these options:

1) FILL YOUR TRUNK

If you are looking for less than a cubic yard of mulch or compost and have a car, mini-van or SUV, you may self-load with the trunkload option. **No site pass is needed.**

- ½" General Compost: **\$10 / trunkload.**
- Double Ground Wood Mulch: **\$5 / trunkload.**



2) BUY IT BY THE YARD

Mulch and compost can be purchased in bulk; OCRRA will load your truck or trailer for you. There is no self-loading and no site pass is needed. A pass is only needed if you are looking to drop off material. Don't have a truck or trailer? Check out a list of local haulers that will deliver mulch and compost to you by the yard at www.tinyurl.com/haul4u.



- ½" General Compost: **\$15 / cubic yard.**
- ¼" inch Premium Compost: **\$20 / cubic yard.**
- Double Ground Wood Mulch: **\$12 / cubic yard.**

3) BUY COMPOST IN BAGS

OCRRA compost is available at more than 30 retail locations (¼" premium compost only). Each store sets its own price point. Check page 5 for a list of retailers, which can also be found at OCRRA.org.



If you are only looking to drop off material at either the Amboy or Jamesville Compost Site you will need a 2020 Compost Site Pass. This **\$25 residential pass** allows unlimited, year-round drop-off of yard waste and food scraps at both Compost Sites. It also comes with two free bags of ¼" premium compost. The drop off pass is for residential use only, and is not available to commercial customers. To purchase a 2020 Compost Site Pass, visit www.tinyurl.com/OCRRA_compostpass, or stop by one of the Compost Sites when they are open.

Visit OCRRA's award-winning Compost Sites and help "Save the World a Little Each Day," while also creating beautiful landscapes and gardens at home.

**STA or Seal of Testing Assurance is a certification bestowed upon organizations that rigorously test their compost products through third party laboratories. It is given by the US Composting Council, a national organization devoted to the development, expansion and promotion of the composting industry.*



Site Hours	Jamesville Compost Site	Amboy Compost Site
		4370 Route 91 Jamesville
	Seasonally open to residents April 1 to November 30 Thursday – Saturday 7:30 am – 3:30 pm	Open to residents Year-Round Monday – Friday 7:30 am – 3:30 pm



Residential Mulch & Compost Haulers

The businesses listed below may be contacted to haul materials from OCRRA Compost Sites

HAULER	PHONE	BASED IN	SINGLE TRIP MAX VOLUME*
Alan Seabrook	(315) 481-9677	Syracuse: Serving Onondaga County	7 cu. yds.
Bill Guptill	(315) 345-5451	Nedrow	6 cu. yds.
Daniels Dump Trailer Services	(315) 898-0947	Memphis: Serving Onondaga County	6 cu. yds.
J.M. Landscape & Plowing	(315) 430-5549	Baldwinsville	7 cu. yds.
John Majowsky	(315) 247-8111	Onondaga County	8 cu. yds.
Ken's Lawn Care	(315) 243-2295	Camillus: Serving Camillus, Fairmount, Syracuse, Baldwinsville, Marcellus	10 cu. yds.
Landscapes Etc. LLC	(315) 447-5844	Cazenovia: Serving Manlius, Jamesville, Dewitt, Fayetteville, Chittenango	16 cu. yds.
Larry Belge: Commercial Lawn & Landscape	(315) 699-4912	Liverpool, Clay, Cicero, North Syracuse	5 cu. yds.
Mosher's Landscape	(315) 678-1431	Baldwinsville: Serving Onondaga County	3 cu. yds.
Northern Firewood	(315) 668-9663	West Monroe	15 cu. yds.

*** Heavier products may have lower maximum volumes for a single trip. OCRRA is neither recommending nor endorsing any of the service providers above.**

Did You Quaran-Clean During COVID-19?

Textiles are items such as old clothing, linens, towels, curtains, bags, shoes and stuffed animals. They can be donated year-round to charitable organizations, even if they are stained, ripped or otherwise unwearable. They simply need to be washed and dry. Even if they cannot be worn, they can be recycled into new products like wiping rags for industrial cleaning and insulation for homes. Textiles cannot be recycled in your blue bin or recycling cart, but there are plenty of easy to use drop-off locations. Visit www.tinyurl.com/cny-textiles for a full list of donation locations in Onondaga County; call in advance to be sure they are open.



HOUSEHOLD TOXICS DISPOSAL

As of this newsletter's printing, OCRRA's Household Hazardous Waste drop off program was on pause, due to COVID-19 concerns. Visit www.tinyurl.com/OCRRAtoxics to find out if the program is accepting reservations at this time. When the program is operation, toxic items from Onondaga County households (not businesses) are accepted at no cost.

WHAT CAN YOU BRING?

- Automotive products: transmission fluid, brake fluid, engine degreaser, antifreeze, diesel fuel and gasoline.
- Cleaning supplies: oven cleaner, drain cleaner, lye, toilet bowl cleaner, floor / furniture polish, mothballs and petroleum products.
- Gardening supplies: pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, etc.
- Painting supplies: oil-based paints, stains or finishes, paint thinner, turpentine, brush cleaner, paint stripper and wood preservatives. **No latex paint is accepted.**
- Miscellaneous products: pool chemicals, lighter fluid, kerosene, driveway sealer, mercury thermometers and thermostats, nail polish remover, smoke detectors, loose asbestos and asbestos pipe wrapping (pipes removed); all asbestos must be double-bagged.
- Products labeled as toxic, flammable, poisonous or corrosive.



Weed and wasp killer are just two examples of materials accepted at OCRRA's Household Hazardous Wastes program. Visit www.OCRRA.org to find out when the program is operational again.

COMPOST BY THE BAG

These fine retailers sell OCRRA's high quality compost by the bag at their own price point. Call for details.

North Area

- B'ville Supply – Baldwinsville
- Ballantyne Gardens – Liverpool
- CountryMax – Cicero
- CountryMax – Lysander
- CountryMax – Oswego
- Deaton's Agway – Pulaski
- Green Acres Lawn & Garden Center – Liverpool
- Pond & Rock Shop – Cicero
- T.J.'s Lawns Plus – Phoenix
- Village Ace Hardware – Baldwinsville

South Area

- Bob's True Value – Syracuse
- Carol Watson Greenhouse – LaFayette
- CountryMax – Cortland
- CountryMax – Norwich
- Green Hills Farms – Nedrow
- Neil Casey's Farm Market – Tully
- Valley View Gardens – Cortland
- Watson Farms Landscaping & Garden Center – LaFayette

East Area

- Aspinall's – Chittenango
- CountryMax – DeWitt
- EverGreen Landscaping and Garden Center – Syracuse
- Green Scapes – Jamesville
- Manlius True Value Hardware – Manlius
- Materials Direct – East Syracuse
- Spruce Ridge Landscaping & Garden Center – Cazenovia
- Syracuse Cooperative Market – Syracuse
- Village Ace Hardware – Fayetteville
- Vollmer Farms – East Syracuse
- Wagner Farms – Rome

West Area

- Maldonado Gardens – Elbridge
- Oliver's Produce – Marcellus
- Silver Spring Farm Market – Onondaga Hill
- Sollecito Landscaping Nursery – Syracuse
- Town Square Ace Hardware – Skaneateles



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Ever Wonder How Well We Do With Recycling? OCRRA Measured...

Theresa Evans, OCRRA Recycling Specialist

Onondaga County residents and OCRRA are working together to achieve waste reduction and recycling goals. In order to gauge how well things are going, it is important to measure and track our collective progress.

By learning what is in our blue bins and our trash cans (and how much), OCRRA can determine the success of the community's recycling efforts, as well as make recommendations for future improvements. In the spring and fall of 2019, a Waste Quantification and Characterization (Q&C) study was performed to do just that.

Over 50,000 pounds of material—some 25 tons—were hand sorted into 61 different recycling and trash categories. More than 300 total samples were examined, and the results are as follows:

TRASH

Most of the materials that should be recycled actually are! When looking at the total annual trash of 288,000 tons, the study indicates that:

- 10.8%, or about 62 million pounds, included **paper** that was potentially recyclable;
- 1.5%, or about 8.6 million pounds, was **plastic** that was potentially recyclable; and
- 0.7%, or about 4 million pounds, was metal cans;
- **Food waste** comprised approximately 21%, or about 121 million pounds of the trash, while potentially recyclable clothes and textile materials comprised 5.2%, or about 30 million pounds;
- **Film plastics**, including retail plastic bags, shrink wrap, and other types of plastic wrapping represented 8.8% of the trash, or about 50.5 million pounds.

RESIDENTIAL RECYCLING

- Roughly 40,000 tons of residential curbside recyclables are collected annually. According to the study, more than half, about 65%, or 53 million pounds, were comprised



Photo Credit: Klineberg Photography, Syracuse, 2019.

Workers open bags of trash and sort the contents into more than 60 categories for analysis during the Waste Quantification and Classification Study in 2019. Periodically, OCRRA undergoes this type of study to better understand what is in our trash and recycling, so that we can gauge the success of the community's recycling efforts and learn how we can improve our programs and education.

of **paper**, including cardboard, (28.3%), newspapers (10.8%), and mixed paper such as junk mail and magazines (15.8%);

- 11.2% of the recyclables was comprised of **glass**, or about 9 million pounds;
- 12.3% were **plastics**, or about 10 million pounds; of these plastics, about 50% were recyclable; the remainder was non-recyclable plastic that should have been placed in the trash;
- 3.9% were **metal** cans, about 3.1 million pounds.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Most recycling contamination was a result of recyclables being placed inside plastic bags and then thrown in the blue bin. **Bagged materials were 5% of the overall contamination.** None of the items in the bags get recycled as it is nearly impossible to open up thousands of bags on a daily basis at the sorting facility.

They end up as trash. Recyclables must be loose when placed in the blue bin and other recycling collection containers.

- **Cardboard** continues to increase in relation to other materials, which is likely a result of the popularity of online shopping.
- **Newspaper** continues to decrease in relation to other materials, which is likely connected to the decrease of printed news and the availability of digital news and information.
- More than half of the **glass** in the recycling bin was beverage containers such as wine bottles, liquor bottles and non-alcoholic beverage containers such as Snapple bottles. None of these bottles have a deposit; they are not included in the New York State Bottle Bill. If that Bill were to be expanded to include these bottles, it would have a significant positive impact on recycling,

as bottles that have a deposit are recycled at a much higher rate than those without one. Also, **Bottle Bill glass is turned into new bottles.**

Glass in the blue bin ends up being used for landfill cover or in roadway construction.

The Waste Q&C indicates that efforts to reduce, reuse and recycle are working, but that there are opportunities to develop and grow programs to achieve even more. For example, **textiles**, such as clothes that no longer fit, and **film plastics**, like retail shopping bags, are large components of our trash that could be recycled, but NOT

in the blue bin. Clean and dry textiles can be donated for recycling year-round at any local Rescue Mission or Salvation Army location. Film plastics such as overwrap found on paper towels, dry cleaning bags, retail bags, etc. can be brought back to retail stores for recycling.

As we continue to work towards our community's recycling goals, waste analyses like this study help inform our policy and public education decisions.

Theresa Evans can be reached at tevens@ocrra.org.



FACT: "When in doubt, throw it out" is the best way to avoid contaminating recyclables. Not sure? It probably isn't recyclable.



From the Executive Director's Desk...

Recycling in the Time of COVID

Dereth Glance, Executive Director

I sincerely hope this message finds you and your family healthy during this tumultuous time. The pandemic has impacted every aspect of our life in its own profound way. Things we took for granted like being able to visit and hug loved ones outside our home and how we conduct business have all dramatically changed.

The pressure from the pandemic administered a society-wide stress test. This test demonstrates how already stressed systems have fractured further, while also illuminating the systemic changes needed to restore health, instill truth and build resiliency into our societal institutions and practices.

In the world of solid waste, the fractures in the system are apparent. Some may be temporary, some may be permanent, and all require changes to how we recover resources and sustainably manage waste.

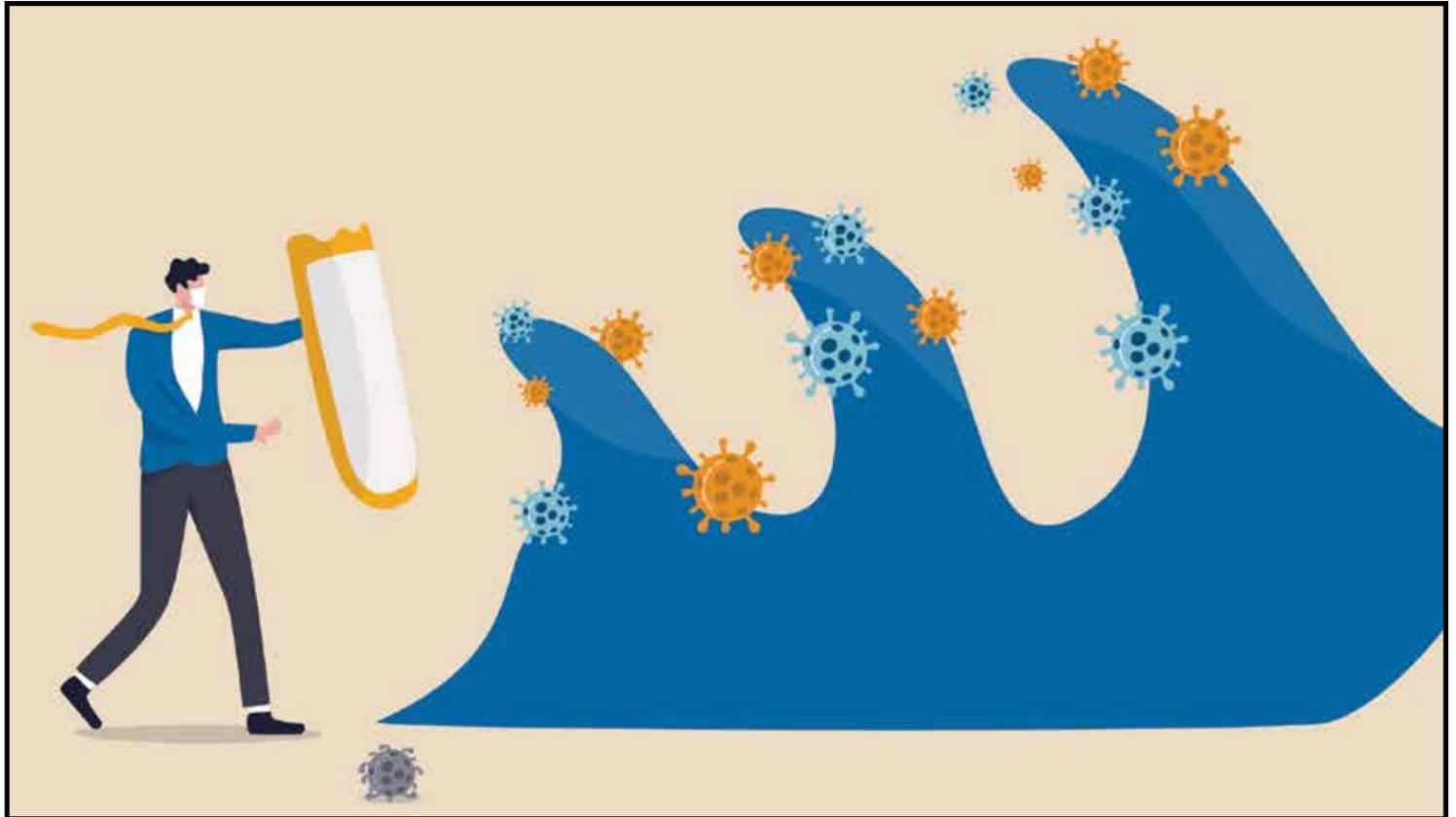


Photo Credit: iStock.com, 2020.

The recycling industry, already severely weakened by unfavorable market conditions in 2019, was further challenged by COVID-19. The pandemic unmasked many truths: for solid waste, it is that recycling is not free. OCRRA's Recycling 2020 Report looks at ways to sustain our community's recycling programs. One of the report's recommendations is to reevaluate what goes in the blue bin to make sure each material category is being recycled in the best way. Check out the report's other recommendations at: www.tinyurl.com/Recycle2020Report.

Since 2018, recycling markets have been depressed due to the loss of the global export market dominated by China. The pressures from COVID-19 have compounded recycling market losses. They have reduced

alternative revenue sources that previously covered the upside-down recycling market. Those revenues have evaporated too.

What is an upside-down recycling market? It is when the cost to collect, sort and

deliver recyclables to market exceeds the cost to collect and process garbage.

Some years, recycling netted revenue and some it lost revenue; but before 2018 the losses never exceeded six figures in consecutive years.

Recycling has changed and it is our responsibility to recognize that and adapt the system to ensure recycling is achieving its environmental and sustainability goals.

Recently, OCRRA's Board of Directors took a deep dive into curbside recycling in Onondaga County and published their Recycling 2020 Report.

The Report offered short- and long-term options for OCRRA and its regulatory partners to consider.

Recognizing that the urgency for implementation has accelerated, OCRRA formed the Recycling Action Plan for 2021 Ad Hoc Committee. It is focusing on recommending how and at what level OCRRA should fund curbside collection.

OCRRA is not tax funded. Its revenue comes primarily from tipping fees at the Waste-to-Energy Facility in Jamesville, across from the newly renovated commercial transfer station on Rock Cut Road.

OCRRA RECYCLING COSTS AS PERCENTAGE OF OPERATING EXPENSES

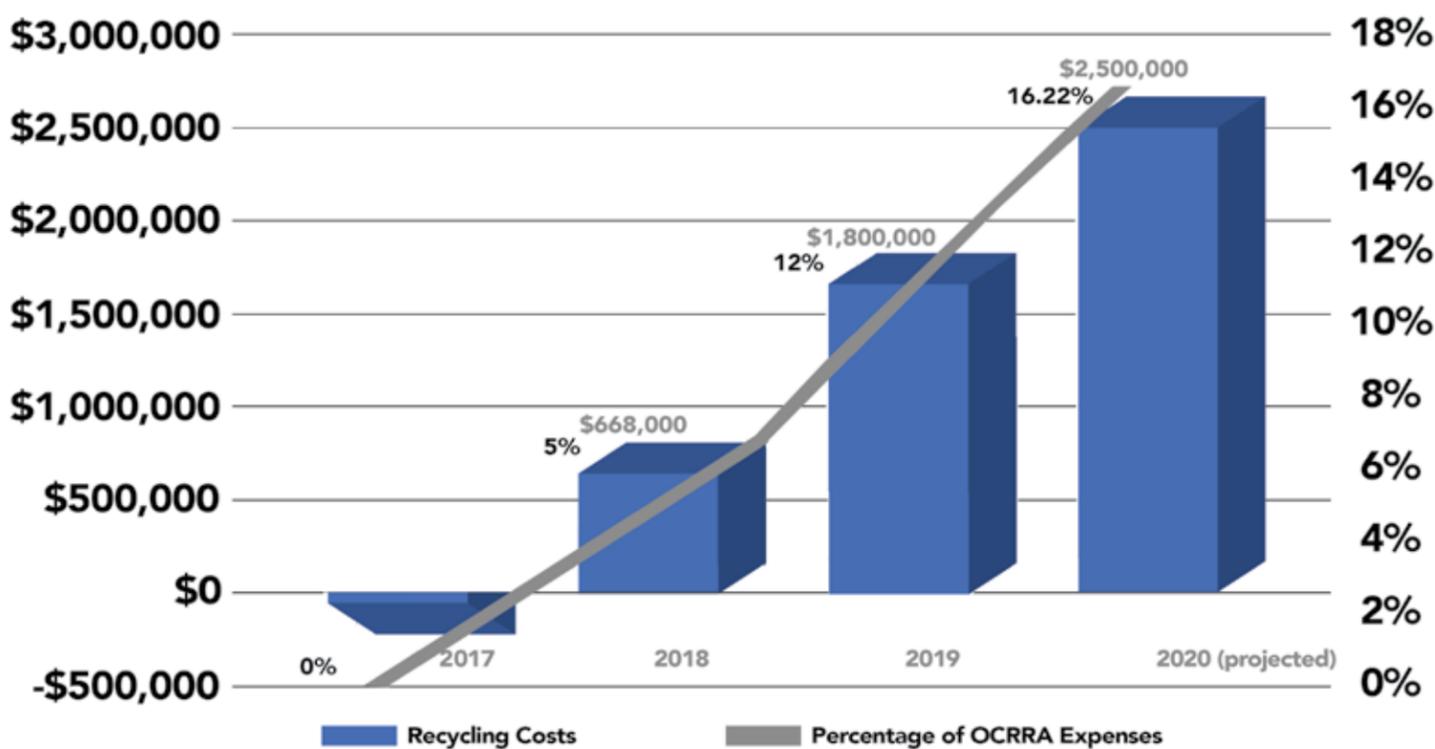


Photo Credit: OCRRA's Recycling 2020 Report, 2020.

A look at how recycling costs have skyrocketed in recent years, from OCRRA's Recycling 2020 Report. This unprecedented increase was spurred by China closing its doors to contaminated recyclables, which flooded the market and drove processing and shipping costs to all-time highs. In addition, COVID-19 is also negatively impacting OCRRA's overall finances.

—continued on page 8

FACT: Recycling isn't free. There is a cost to recycling and the current funding structure is not sustainable; changes must happen.

Recycling in the Time of Covid

continued from page 7

These tip fees are paid by commercial and municipal trash haulers. Some citizens feel these rates directly through a bill from their private hauler, as an integrated part of their taxes, or they see it as a separate line-item on their taxes.

Electricity generated by the Waste-to-Energy Facility has contributed less and less to OCRRA's revenue since 2008. In April 2020, less than a penny was earned per kilowatt generated. OCRRA assumed weak electricity revenues for 2020, but we did not assume prices would dip this low. All this to say, there is no longer electricity revenue to support 'upside down' recycling.

OCRRA revenues support all of our programs including household hazardous waste; compost and mulch facilities; mercury collection from fluorescent bulbs, thermostats and thermometers and our other special events. OCRRA revenues also support curbside recycling by providing blue bins, wide-spread public education on what goes in the blue bins and guaranteeing a zero-tip fee to haulers at the recycling facility.

This means haulers are not charged to drop off residential recycling at the recycling facility. OCRRA covers those costs; which have been exponentially higher than normal since 2018 and don't appear to be going down.

COVID-19 has unmasked many truths. For solid waste, it is that recycling isn't free. Hiding that cost does not do any good for the important practice of recycling correctly.

One of the other recommendations in the Recycling 2020 Report was to reevaluate what goes in the blue bin to make sure each material category was being recycled in the best way.

Cardboard and paper can be transformed into new boxes in Onondaga County. This is ideal as it stays local. There is no need to ship overseas and incur exorbitant shipping charges.

All metal, whether it is steel or aluminum, is extracted at the Waste-to-Energy Facility and recycled, so metal could easily come out of the blue bin and still be recycled...

Glass co-mingled in a blue bin drags everything down by contaminating the paper. Also, glass can only be effectively recycled outside the bin; glass from a recycling facility ends up as landfill cover, not as new bottles. Only deposit bottles are clean enough to be made into new bottles. Expanding the NYS Bottle Bill to include wine and liquor bottles, which are almost 50% of the glass in the blue bin, would ensure more glass is turned into new bottles.

Plastics are a huge source of confusion, contamination and comprise a very small percentage of blue bin material. Working to expand Extended Producer Responsibility legislation for packaging could reduce the amount of non-recyclable plastic in the waste stream and pave the way for less contamination in the blue bin.

OCRRA continues to work collaboratively to revitalize recycling and to ensure a transparent and convenient curbside recycling program for our community. I invite you to read more about the current state of recycling in OCRRA's Recycling 2020 Report and the 1st Quarter 2020 Recycling Report; you will find them here: www.tinyurl.com/QuarterlyDEC.

Keep engaged with OCRRA by following us on Facebook or joining our email list; register at the bottom of OCRRA.org.

Thank you for caring about recycling and considering how it could be improved and sustained for years to come in our forward-thinking community.

Dereh Glance can be reached at dglance@ocrra.org.

Save the world a little each day.™

BLUE BIN OR NO?

Not all plastics can go in the blue bin. This visual guide shows TYPES of items you should know about. Please use this as a SHAPE guide. If you have an item that fits these general descriptions, put it in – or keep it out of – your recycling container, per the instructions below.

YES

Plastic Bottles



Plastic Jugs



Plastic Jars



Plastic Dairy Tubs (or Dairy Substitute)



NO

Film Plastics*



Clamshell Containers (Trash)



Cords & Hoses (Trash)



Plastic Cups (Trash)



**Stretchy film plastics are recyclable at big box retailers, grocery stores and chain pharmacies; they simply have to be clean, dry and devoid of labels. See OCRRA.org for details.*