

WANTED: YOUR EMPTIES

Although not as prevalent on grocery shelves as they used to be, glass bottles and jars still have a presence and need to be recycled when empty. Whether they once held beer, wine, spaghetti sauce, baby food or salsa, glass containers are easy to recycle because they can easily be recycled back to new glass.

Inexplicably, only about 22 percent of glass bottles and jars are recycled nationally. Massachusetts recycles 66 percent due in part to our deposit laws on beverage containers. But aside from getting your coin back for your bottles, why should you recycle glass bottles and containers?

Glass is forever. Glass can be recycled an infinite number of times. The same glass bottle or jar can be recycled over and over again into the same high quality glass every time.

Glass really is recycled. Glass bottles and jars go from recycling bin to store shelf in as few as 30 days. An estimated 80 percent of recovered glass containers are made into new glass bottles.

Glass is an integral part of any recycling program. Recycling diverts this valuable resource from land-filling and incineration. Consumers expect glass to be included in recycling programs.

Glass saves energy. By using recycled glass cullet, the glass container industry reduces the amount of energy it needs for its furnaces. Using recycled glass minimizes consumption of raw materials and lessens the industry's overall demand for energy. Plus it's cost efficient. The glass recycling process is a closed-loop system, creating no additional waste or by-products.

Glass recycling lessens greenhouse gas emissions. For container glass, a 10 percent increase in cullet reduces particulates by 8 percent, reduces nitrogen oxide by 4 percent, and reduces sulfur oxides by 10 percent. And, for every six tons of recycled container glass used, one ton of carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas, is reduced.

Glass saves raw materials. For every ton of glass recycled, more than a ton of raw materials are saved, including 1,300 pounds of sand, 410 pounds of soda ash, 380 pounds of limestone, and 160 pounds of feldspar.

Save the landfill. Save the World. Recycling glass helps to preserve natural resources while lessening the load on landfills—and helping communities avoid expensive disposal costs.

While the majority of recycled glass is made into new glass bottles and jars, glass can also be remade into other products. The second largest market for recycled glass is fiberglass. Other markets include abrasives, “glasphalt”, glass beads for reflective paint and filler in storm drains. A small amount of glass is exported for recycling.

