

Recycling goes far, far beyond the bin at the edge of the curb. In fact, in 2017 alone, more than 130 million metric tons of scrap metal, paper, plastic, glass, textiles, rubber, and electronics, valued at more than \$80 billion, were manufactured into specification grade commodities by the scrap recycling industry in the United States. These commodities were sold as valuable feedstock material to industrial consumers in the United States and in nearly 145 countries around the world and contributed nearly \$18 billion in export sales, significantly helping the U.S. trade balance.

The U.S.-based scrap recycling industry is a sophisticated, capital-intensive industry that employs approximately 156,000 workers in the United States. As the first link in the manufacturing supply chain, scrap recycling has been integral to the U.S. economy, global trade, and resource sustainability for more than 200 years.



U.S. Economy

	2010	2017
Industry Size	\$77 Billion	\$ 117 Billion
Employment (Yearly Average)	107,000	156,000
Volume of Scrap Material Annually Processed (Metric Tons)		
Iron and Steel	66,000,000	66,000,000
Paper	46,800,000	46,100,000
Aluminum	4,600,000	5,268,000
Copper	1,900,000	1,862,000
Lead	1,200,000	1,056,000
Zinc	160,000	67,000
Plastic (PET bottles only)	655,000 (2009)	815,000 (2016)
Electronics	3,500,000	\$5 Million+ (est)
Tires (# of tires)	90,000,000	110,000,000 (2016)



Environment

Scrap recycling reduces greenhouse gas emissions by requiring significantly less energy to manufacture products from recyclables than virgin materials and by avoiding landfilling.

Energy saved using recycled materials is up to:

95% for aluminum	75% for copper	88% for plastic
60% for paper	60% for steel	34% for glass

Scrap recycling conserves natural resources:
Recycling one ton of:

- Paper saves 3.3 cubic yards of landfill.
- Steel conserves 2,500 lbs. of iron ore, 1,400 lbs. of coal, and 120 lbs. of limestone.
- Aluminum conserves more than 4 metric tons of bauxite ore.

Cleaner air and water result from safely removing potentially hazardous materials and keeping them out of landfills:

- Mercury switches removed from older automobiles
- Lead recovered from computer monitors

Sources: ISRI, AF&OA, International Aluminum Institute, U.S. EPA, SRI, USITC, USGS.



Global Trends

	2010	2017
Value of Scrap Commodities Exported Helping U.S. Trade Balances	\$29.6 Billion	\$17.9 Billion
Metric Tons of Scrap Exported Including:	45.3 Million	37.9 Million
Iron and Steel	18.7 Million	13.8 Million
Paper	18.9 Million	18.3 Million
Aluminum	1.9 Million	1.6 Million
Plastic	2.0 Million	1.7 Million
Nickel, Stainless, and Alloy	1.9 Million	1.2 Million
Copper	1.0 Million	1.0 Million
Lead	44,000	56,000
Zinc	78,000	37,600
Rubber	172,000	102,500
Number of Countries Scrap was Exported to and Leading Destinations / Value	158 Countries	158 Countries
China	\$8.5 Billion	\$5.6 Billion
Canada	\$3.0 Billion	\$2.1 Billion
Mexico	\$1.7 Billion	\$1.1 Billion
Turkey	\$1.5 Billion	\$1 Billion
India	\$776 Million	\$923 Million
Germany	\$687 Million	\$910 Million
South Korea	\$1.6 Billion	\$778 Million
Taiwan	\$1.4 Billion	\$600 Million
United Kingdom	\$1.2 Billion	\$581 Million
Italy	\$678 Million	\$574 Million
Japan	\$554 Million	\$505 Million
Vietnam	\$282 Million	\$320 Million



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