

September 2025

Dear Rhode Island Resident:

You may have seen national headlines claiming that “recycling is dead” or that it no longer works. Here in Rhode Island, that couldn’t be further from the truth. **Recycling Matters!**

Our state’s mixed recycling program is active, effective, and making a real difference. In Fiscal Year 2022 alone, the Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation successfully sorted and repurposed 74% of the material that was accepted for processing at our Materials Recovery Facility (MRF). This amounted to more than 71,000 tons of material—the equivalent of 15,000 truckloads given a second life.

While our program is strong, its success depends on all Rhode Islanders. One of the biggest challenges we face is contamination—and it’s more common than you might think. **What is contamination?** Contamination happens when the wrong materials (like plastic bags, food waste, hoses/pipes, foam, wood, or clothing/textiles) are placed in recycling carts—or when the right materials are prepared incorrectly, such as recyclables placed inside plastic bags. When a recycling load is too contaminated, the entire truck may be rejected for recycling purposes and sent to the landfill instead—wasting recyclable materials, landfill capacity and increasing costs for local communities.

Take these steps to help keep recycling on track in Rhode Island:

- **Only put what is accepted in Rhode Island’s mixed recycling program**—paper, cardboard, and cartons; metal cans, lids, and foil; glass bottles and jars; and plastic containers. **That’s it, nothing more!**
- **Keep it clean and simple**—Don’t bag recyclables, and make sure items are empty at a minimum and rinsed whenever possible.
- **When in doubt, check it out**—Visit www.AtoZ.rirrc.org to see what belongs.
- **Make it fun**—Test your skills with our interactive sorting game, Ready, Set, Sort! at RhodeIslandResource.recycle.game.
- **Talk to others**—Share what you’ve learned with a neighbor, friend, or family member. Small actions create big impact.



Want to see for yourself how Rhode Island’s recycling system and other operations work? We offer tours! You can schedule one through our website at www.rirrc.org/tours.

Recycling works in Rhode Island because of your efforts—and with your continued commitment, we can do even more. For more information and helpful resources, visit www.RecycleRI.org and remember recycling matters!

Sincerely,



Luigi Vergato
Executive Director, RI Resource Recovery

