



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Recycling industry brings \$13 billion boost to SC economy *Economic impact doubles in eight years with growth of recyclers, recycling rate*

Columbia, SC – The recycling industry in South Carolina brings a \$13 billion boost to the state's economy annually – double the estimated impact of recycling in 2006 – according to a new report released today.

Compiled by Dr. Frank Hefner, the economic impact report quantified the contributions of recycling through a combination of direct survey data from recycling companies as well as economic modeling through IMPLAN. The report was an update to a 2006 study with the same methodology.

Despite the recession, the total economic impact of recycling activities in the state grew nearly five percent annually to double its impact in eight years, while recycling's benefit to jobs across South Carolina grew to 54,121 jobs impacted – a 44 percent increase since 2006.

The updated report was commissioned through a partnership between the South Carolina Department of Commerce, the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC), New Carolina and RecyclonomicsSC, a non-profit organization that promotes recycling as a way to improve the economy.

The 2014 report's key findings reveal that recycling contributes:

- \$13 billion in total economic impact – double the impact of \$6.5 billion in 2006
- 54,121 jobs, up 44 percent from 37,440 impacted jobs eight years ago
- \$2.7 billion in labor income, up 80 percent from the 2006 report
- \$329 million in state and local taxes

Moreover, the state's recycling industry expects additional growth this calendar year. Nearly 64 percent of survey respondents indicated they are planning an expansion in 2014 with an average of 3.5 employees each, or approximately 1,162 new employees added to payrolls this year. The average annual growth rate predicted for the industry is 19 percent.

"While many recognize the environmental benefit of recycling, these results show the strong connection between recycling and business," said Secretary of Commerce Bobby Hitt. "As the business agency for South Carolina, Commerce will continue to provide support for the more than 500 companies in the state that are engaged in recycling activities and making sizeable contributions to our state's economy."

Along with the growth of recycling's impact to the economy, participation in recycling also has grown. The state's recycling rate increased to 31 percent in 2013 from 22 percent in 2009, with each South Carolinian on average recycling 1.59 pounds per day.

"Last year South Carolina recycled almost 600 pounds per person. It is an extraordinary number and is only growing thanks to the grass roots dedication of our businesses and local governments in partnership with DHEC," said Catherine Templeton, director of SCDHEC. "As a result, local governments saved more than \$53 million in disposal costs last year alone and have earned more than \$67 million in the last four years."

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Recycling brings \$13 billion boost to SC economy – add one

A directory of businesses engaged in recycling activities maintained by the Department of Commerce identifies 524 firms in 2014, up 54 percent from 340 firms in 2006. These companies include collectors, haulers, processors, end-users, exporters and others. Since 2006, the state's recycling industry has announced more than \$4.63 billion in new investments.

"Companies within industry clusters come together to increase efficiency and innovation within that industry, while boosting the overall economy in their region," said Laura McKinney, executive director of New Carolina. "Dr. Hefner's report shows that South Carolina's recycling cluster has done just that - dramatically increasing the impact of recycling on the state's economy since coming together as an organized cluster."

Companies large and small comprise South Carolina's recycling industry. Of the more than 520 recycling firms in the state, the number of personnel ranges from 1 to 577 employees. The average number of employees per company is 63, while the median number of employees is 14. Additionally, the average payroll per employee in the industry is \$40,203, above the average wage in South Carolina of \$38,700.

"With an annual economic impact of \$13 billion and over 520 companies across the state, there's no denying that recycling in South Carolina is making treasure out of trash," remarked Tina Huskey, chair of RecyclonomicsSC. "RecyclonomicsSC set a robust goal to 'Arrive at 75' by increasing our current recycling rate from 31 percent to 75 percent before 2030. That success would mean even more innovation, job opportunity and cost savings - further proof that making one small change today can lead to a greener, more prosperous South Carolina."

For additional information on recycling in South Carolina, visit:

www.recyclinginsc.com

<http://www.recyclonomicsc.com>

www.scdhec.gov/HomeAndEnvironment/Recycling/

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