

December 17, 2008

LETTERS

## The Future of Recycling

To the Editor:

“Back at Junk Value, Recyclables Are Piling Up” (front page, Dec. 8) makes the point that markets for American recyclables are now global and revenues from their sale have dropped precipitously as the domestic and world economy contracts.

But the volatility of commodity markets has always caused recycling revenues to be on shaky ground. In fact, the large growth in municipal recycling programs, which took off in the 1990s, occurred when local governments’ share of revenues from recycling was nonexistent or uncertain at best. Only over the last five years have localities come to view recycling programs as more secure revenue generators.

What puts recycling at greater risk in the current downturn than during previous periods is the high level of stress on all aspects of the local government tax base. Under such conditions, recycling may be seen as a nonessential service to be cut back or eliminated, thereby wiping out years of public education and citizen outreach.

It is hoped that President-elect Barack Obama’s stimulus package, which targets “green” jobs and local public works, also will include the recycling infrastructure.

Eileen Brettler Berenyi  
Westport, Conn., Dec.

8, 2008

The writer is the publisher of a yearbook on recycling and other solid waste facilities.

•

To the Editor:

Despite the woes of the recycling industry, it is important to note that the glass packaging industry is aggressively moving forward with its plans to make all containers out of 50 percent or more

recycled material by the year 2013.

Unlike other industries, the glass packaging industry does not rely on foreign markets like China to do its recycling for it. We recycle domestically, creating American jobs and helping the environment by reducing the amount of energy and resources needed to create each new container.

We need recycled material to achieve this goal, and we continue to encourage all Americans to recycle glass.

Joseph J. Cattaneo  
President  
Glass Packaging Institute  
Alexandria, Va., Dec.

8, 2008

[Copyright 2008 The New York Times Company](#)

[Privacy Policy](#) | [Search](#) | [Corrections](#) | [RSS](#) | [First Look](#) | [Help](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Work for Us](#) | [Site Map](#) |

---