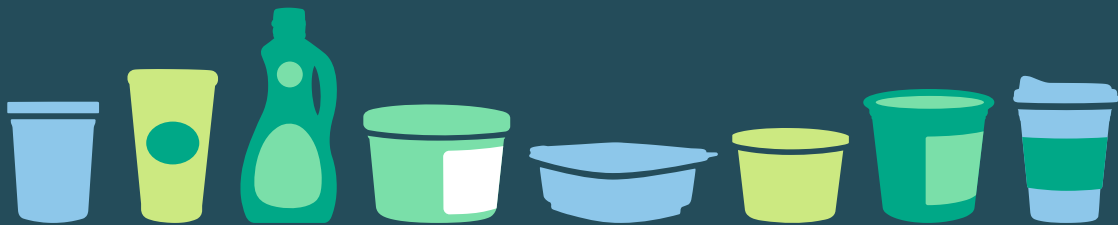




**The Recycling  
Partnership**  
Solving for Circularity

# Polypropylene Recycling Coalition



**ANNUAL REPORT 2024**

**“We've seen the Coalition's success in supporting a more circular ecosystem for plastic.”**

**Michelle Waring**

**Steward for Sustainability and Everyday Good at Tom's of Maine**

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## Coalition Impacts

(Since 2020)

# 11%

Increase in Polypropylene  
Community Recycling  
Program Acceptance\*

# 48M

People Gained New or  
Improved Access to Recycle  
their Polypropylene\*

# 64M

New Pounds of Polypropylene  
Recycled per Year\*



Regained How2Recycle®  
Widely Recyclable Label for Key  
Polypropylene Formats

\*Combined actuals and projected impact  
from grants through August 2024

# Letter from the Coalition Leadership: Partnering to Advance Polypropylene Circularity

Every year, more than 2 billion pounds of polypropylene end up in the waste stream. This versatile plastic plays a crucial role in everyday items, from yogurt cups and takeout containers to medicine packaging, and can also be recycled into a wide range of products. But despite the growing applications for polypropylene, only about 8% is recycled.

**The Polypropylene Recycling Coalition (the Coalition) exists to change this by unlocking the potential to capture and recycle 2 billion pounds of this valuable resource.**

Formed in 2020 by The Recycling Partnership (The Partnership), the Coalition stands by our commitment to change the recycling landscape for polypropylene through grants, collaborations, and partnerships. We are proud of the incredible strides made in increasing the community recycling program acceptance rate and recyclability of polypropylene. The Partnership serves as a guiding force to Coalition members as they navigate packaging regulations and collectively look to increase the recyclability of polypropylene.

This progress has taken place against a backdrop of an evolving policy landscape and technological advances. Five U.S. states are rolling out Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) laws for paper and product packaging, with more sure to follow. The Coalition provides members with support to understand relevant policies and find solutions for maximizing polypropylene's value, both in policy states and across the United States.

**Join us as we strive to drive a 5% increase in the national recycling rate for polypropylene by the end of 2026, with a strategic focus on meeting recycling mandates in West Coast policy states. Accomplishing this requires deploying \$10 million throughout 2025, part of a comprehensive strategy to deploy \$55 million to modernize recycling infrastructure and expand polypropylene capture nationwide.**



**Brittany LaValley**

VP of Material Advancement  
The Recycling Partnership



**Eric DesRoberts**

Director of Polypropylene  
Recycling Advancement  
The Recycling Partnership

## 10 Years of The Recycling Partnership's Impacts



Since The Recycling Partnership's inception 10 years ago, our investment in the recycling system has surpassed \$69 million through over 450 grants. These projects include improvements to local recycling acceptance and education, as well as upgrades at over 100 recycling facilities to improve capture and processing for all materials, including polypropylene. **To date, the Polypropylene Recycling Coalition has invested \$15 million in 60 grants to communities and recycling facilities.** When all funding is fully utilized, polypropylene recycling support will be expanded to 48 million people, leading to an estimated 64 million pounds of incremental polypropylene recycled annually.

# Building a Better Recycling System



At The Recycling Partnership, we know that eight out of 10 people already believe in the positive potential of recycling. **Our mission is to build a better recycling system, one that delivers the economic and environmental benefits our communities and the hundreds of thousands of people who work throughout the recycling industry deserve.** Through our material-specific coalitions, we harness the power of collective action by bringing together companies that are committed to increasing the recycling of key materials.

Polypropylene—also known as #5 plastic—is used in everything from consumer goods and packaging to durable goods and industrial applications. Its inherent value and functional properties make it a highly desirable material. However, the residential recycling system has not yet reached its full potential to handle polypropylene. Currently, around 35% of people in the U.S. are unable to recycle this plastic in their community recycling program, and its recycling rates lag behind those of plastics like PET and HDPE.

There is a significant opportunity to expand the demand for post-consumer recycled polypropylene, spur investment, and create a more robust market for this versatile material. The Coalition leverages The Partnership's years of expertise

and industry knowledge to improve the circularity of polypropylene.

With the Coalition's targeted work and investment, we are engaging communities, supporting recycling facilities, and guiding producers. Over the past four years, communities and recyclers in locations across the United States have been expanding their polypropylene recycling capabilities with Coalition grants. And through Coalition-supported education campaigns, households are learning to take advantage of being able to recycle polypropylene packaging in their community recycling program.

The Coalition's continued work is helping to realize the value of keeping this material out of landfills. Its success has also served as a model for subsequent material-specific coalitions: one dedicated to PET and another to film and flexible materials.

The Coalition will build on our growing body of data to further expand polypropylene recycling participation and capture. EPR will have significant effects, and the Coalition is positioned to capitalize on the opportunity to align its goals with the goals of states implementing EPR or other policies to advance circularity.

# Making Recycling a Reality

For the U.S. residential recycling system to function effectively, five requirements must be met. The Polypropylene Recycling Coalition supports the advancement of these essential requirements toward our mission to build a better recycling system.



**1** **100% of packaging needs to be recyclable.**  
The packaging that enters the system must be recyclable; and we need clear, harmonized, and transparent standards as to what makes a package recyclable.

**2** **100% of households need access to recycling from their home.**  
Everyone can dispose of trash, but not every household has access to recycling. For those with access, some locations do not collect all packaging types thus limiting the amount of recyclable material collected.

**3** **Residents need to fully engage in recycling.**  
Recyclable material is lost because some households with access do not receive sufficient communication to help them use their recycling service and recycle all their recyclables. In an effective system at least 90% of households should participate.

**4** **Recycling facilities need to effectively process 95% of the material.**  
Once collected from households, recycling facilities need adequate technology and infrastructure to sort and process different material types.

**5** **Recycling facilities need sufficient end markets.**  
After recycling facilities sort the various material types, they must be able to sell these recycled commodities. Sufficient end markets for these materials are key to an efficient recycling system.

# Answering the Call to Improve Polypropylene Recycling

Polypropylene use is growing, and so is the demand for post-consumer recycled polypropylene. But communities have lacked the infrastructure and participation needed to capture this material.



**2B**

Pounds of polypropylene waste generated annually



**8%**

Polypropylene is recycled



**>60%**

Americans have access to polypropylene recycling

## Our Origin Story

**2018**

When international borders closed their doors to the export of mixed plastics in 2018, it was a major setback for polypropylene recycling.

**January 2020**

Two years later, the broadly recognized labeling system How2Recycle® downgraded polypropylene from “widely recyclable” to “check locally” given the number of communities that stopped accepting polypropylene.

**July 2020**

The Recycling Partnership acted with urgency, releasing a joint industry statement supporting polypropylene recycling. Shortly afterward, the Coalition launched.

**July 2022**

Due in part to the Coalition’s efforts, How2Recycle® reinstated polypropylene tubs, jugs, bottles, and jars to “Widely Recyclable” in the United States.

**July 2024**

The Coalition celebrates 4 years of impact, marking the milestone with \$15 million in grants to over 60 recycling facilities and communities.

# Coalition Goals and Impacts

## The Recycling Partnership's Three-Year Strategic Plan

The Partnership's goal is to increase the national residential recycling rate by 25%, capturing an additional 2.6 million tons of new recycled material per year, by 2026. As part of that goal, the Polypropylene Recycling Coalition is working to increase the residential recycling rate for polypropylene to 30% through activities including:



By 2026, The Partnership's goal is to capture an additional 2.6 million tons of new recycled material per year.



Increase Community Recycling Program Acceptance of Polypropylene



Ensure More Recycling Facilities can Successfully Sort Polypropylene



Support Responsible End Markets with a Reliable Supply of Post-Consumer Recycled Polypropylene



# Coalition Impacts (Since 2020)

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# Coalition Grants



## Overview: How Our Grants Positively Impact Supply and Demand



Recycling facilities receive grants to upgrade equipment that enables new or more efficient sortation of polypropylene.



The Partnership helps local programs communicate to residents about polypropylene acceptance to encourage greater participation in recycling.



More post-consumer recycled polypropylene becomes available for use in new products.

**“ In just four years, 60 grants awarded by the Polypropylene Recycling Coalition have enabled communities across 26 states to improve the collection and sortation of polypropylene. As a co-founding member, we’re proud to have contributed to improving polypropylene recycling access to over 48 million people.”**

**Charlie Schwarze**  
**Senior Director of Sustainability, Keurig Dr Pepper**



IMPACT IN  
PROGRESS

## Scott County, Iowa: Case Study

# Capturing More Polypropylene—and Inviting the Community to Join In



For the past eight years, the Waste Commission of Scott County in Iowa has operated a single-stream materials recovery facility (MRF), meaning all recyclables arrive mixed together and must be separated. Polypropylene has been in that mix, but only a small fraction of it was being processed.

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**"We were seeing polypropylene coming through our lines, and we weren't capturing nearly enough because we just didn't have the staff," said Bryce Stalcup, executive director of the commission. "We went to The Recycling Partnership because we saw that there was a gap in our system."**

A 2023 grant from the Polypropylene Recycling Coalition helped support an optical sorter—a machine that can recognize polypropylene among recyclables much more quickly and reliably than the human eye can—and the purchase of a bunker to store its collection of polypropylene. The sorter enabled a huge leap in the amount of polypropylene Scott County can ship to interested buyers—from about 90,000 pounds in fiscal year 2023 to over 634,000 pounds in the first half of 2024 alone.

Adding optical sorters allowed the facility to move workers into quality control positions. "It was a move to put our staff in safer, more desirable positions and capture more material as it comes through our facility," Stalcup said. The MRF serves 185,000 households in Scott County and 25 surrounding counties. Before the coalition grant, polypropylene recycling was not uniformly promoted throughout these communities. There was a need to highlight the improved capacity for polypropylene recycling and educate residents with messaging about polypropylene acceptance.

To spread the word, the Waste Commission invested in education campaigns, including

a direct mailer with pictures showing examples of recyclable polypropylene such as yogurt and butter tubs. This also helped to reinforce previous regional recycling improvements to nearby communities that send their recyclables to the Scott County MRF. Grants from The Partnership to Iowa City in 2018 and Coralville in 2024 provided recycling carts and education to residents, improving access to nearly 100,000 people.

"With the Coalition grant, we were able to do outreach a little bit beyond Scott County," said Megan Fox, communications and human resources manager at the commission. In addition to the mailer the commission put out messaging on buses, billboards, and via videos that run on YouTube and cable networks. One YouTube video is a virtual MRF tour that has received 1,600 views over eight months.

Stalcup says the investment in sourcing and handling polypropylene, along with new connections to buyers made through The Recycling Partnership, is paying off: "We're capturing more polypropylene than we thought we would."



IMPACT IN  
PROGRESS

Ocean County, New Jersey: Case Study

## Building on a History of Commitment to Recycling

In 2022, the Ocean County's Northern Recycling Center marketed almost 82,000 pounds of polypropylene, which workers had pulled manually at its single-stream facility.

"That material was primarily iced tea bottles, because they were the easiest to recognize," said John Stanton, director of business development. "We had a very low yield."

Ocean County is the second-largest county in New Jersey - the state that pioneered recycling in 1987 with the country's first statewide mandate. Polypropylene started to be accepted in 2021.

Prior to receiving support from The Recycling Partnership's Polypropylene Coalition, the MRF was paying to send polypropylene to landfill. Staff at the county-owned MRF knew they could do more. Today they sell polypropylene to multiple domestic buyers and have done much more than they thought possible.

With support from the Coalition, they installed an optical sorter. In the second half of 2023, Ocean County reported capturing over 850,000 pounds of polypropylene. The sorter's ability to recognize and divert polypropylene from landfill means the county now routinely collects more in one month than it did in an entire year.

New Jersey's Recycled Content Law, which went into effect in January 2024, calls for increased recycled content in plastic packaging, which helps strengthen markets for post-consumer recycled polypropylene and other plastics. The county anticipates being able to collect between 2.2 to 4.4 million pounds of polypropylene each year.

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**"Not only are you getting paid for the material, but you're also saving on the landfill costs," Stanton said. "This is a wonderful win for the county."**





## IMPACT IN PROGRESS

### Recology, Sonoma Marin, California: Case Study

# Technology to Improve Collection

In Santa Rosa, California, a newly modernized MRF handles up to 880,000 pounds per day of mixed recyclables from Sonoma and Marin counties. Recology Sonoma Marin, which completed the \$35 million modernization and opened the facility in early 2024, worked with The Recycling Partnership to include dedicated polypropylene recycling in the project.

The Santa Rosa MRF serves over 170,000 customers in 13 communities. Optical sorters, over 100 conveyor belts, and ample bunkers for storage have made it one of the highest capacity MRFs on the West Coast. In California, recycling facilities are an essential link in meeting the requirements of The Plastic Pollution Prevention and Packaging Producer Responsibility Act, which requires a 65% recycling rate for single-use packaging and foodware by 2032.

Recology had already stopped exporting bales of mixed #3 through #7 plastics and switched some of its operations to recovering polypropylene (#5) a few years ago, according to Julia Mangin, the company's head of sustainability. "Where we operate, it does feel that the markets for polypropylene are well established," she said. "So, it was a priority for us to be able to leverage any technology that would make it even easier to collect."



The Polypropylene Recycling Coalition's grantmaking dovetailed with Recology's plans to modernize its Santa Rosa facility. The flexibility and relative simplicity of the grant process was key, noted Garen Kazanjian, Recology's public policy and regulatory affairs manager. "One of the great aspects is that the Coalition met us where we were, and we didn't have to reinvent the wheel in our processes," he said.

**Recology also values The Partnership's connections to the larger circularity supply chain. "We appreciate that The Recycling Partnership is supported by manufacturers that ultimately will be seeking to recover these materials for their own products," Mangin said. "That's exactly the type of circular system that we want to be creating and that we want to be a part of."**

“One of the great aspects is that the Coalition met us where we were, and we didn't have to reinvent the wheel in our processes.”

Garen Kazanjian  
Public Policy & Regulatory Affairs Manager, Recology  
Polypropylene Recycling Coalition Grantee

# What's Ahead for Polypropylene



The Coalition's grants, collaborations, and partnerships have helped expand polypropylene recycling acceptance and participation, community by community. The effects of this work are now poised to expand further. Data being collected from grantees makes it possible for the Coalition to spot trends, understand the efficacy of certain equipment, and identify where education and outreach could support the recovery of more polypropylene.

The strides grantees are making also have ripple effects. They serve as models to inspire peers and provide a framework for scaling that can be replicated. For grantees that operate recycling facilities, upgrades create an opening to standardize polypropylene recovery and acceptance across many communities, honing best practices in support of recovering this material.

Working both locally and across the recycling system, we are strengthening, enabling, and catalyzing a nationwide supply chain for post-consumer recycled polypropylene that will avert these valuable materials from the landfill and support the advancement of polypropylene circularity.

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**“Tom’s of Maine wants to make a positive impact in the world, and part of that is making sure more plastic is recycled. We joined the Polypropylene Recycling Coalition because we’ve seen the Coalition’s success in supporting a more circular ecosystem for plastic, and we support the collective actions of strengthening collection at the curb, improving sorting and recycling, and enabling end markets for recycled polypropylene.”**

**Michelle Waring**

Steward for Sustainability and Everyday Good at Tom’s of Maine



**“If we can impact 48 million people’s ability to recycle this material in just four years, we look forward to where we go from here.”**

**Diane Marret**

**Berry Global’s Vice President of Sustainability,  
Consumer Packaging North America**

# Making It Work: Keeping Plastic in Circulation and Out of Landfills

Fixing the U.S. recycling system is a large challenge requiring solutions that extend across state lines, reaching millions of households. Despite the scale of the issue, The Recycling Partnership has never treated recyclables as a monolith. We recognize that each type of material comes with its own set of challenges—and opportunities. The same goes for communities, where the hurdles to recycling might vary, but the goal is the same: to stop valuable materials from being wasted.

**The Coalition was created in 2020 to meet a critical moment for a specific material. By advancing infrastructure, boosting education, and informing policy, the Polypropylene Recycling Coalition has begun to turn the tide.**

Today, key polypropylene formats are back to being among How2Recycle®'s "widely recyclable" items, and the Coalition is seeing many polypropylene formats being included on accepted material lists in policy states. Thanks to 60 grants in 26 states, communities and recycling facilities are recovering millions of new pounds of polypropylene for use in new products.

None of this happens without members who have the vision to create fundamental change and the discipline to follow through on commitments. From household brands to key industry players, the Coalition's members are helping to transform the residential recycling system to recover more polypropylene.

While we have progress to celebrate, the Coalition remains focused on our goal to increase polypropylene recycling rates by making system investments, including those needed to ensure milestones and targets are met when EPR implementation begins.



Join us as we strive to drive a 5% increase in the national recycling rate for polypropylene by the end of 2026, with a strategic focus on meeting recycling mandates in West Coast policy states. With targeted investments in education, outreach, and equipment for recycling facilities, we can ensure more communities recycle polypropylene and meet the demands of EPR mandates.

Accomplishing this increase in recycling rates requires deploying \$10 million in new capital throughout 2025, strategically focused on achieving critical milestones. This funding is part of a comprehensive strategy to deploy \$55 million in new capital to modernize recycling infrastructure and expand polypropylene capture nationwide.

**Together, we can transform the system and make a lasting impact on polypropylene recycling. Join us in driving this change to build a better recycling system.**

**To become part of the polypropylene recycling movement, [join the Coalition today or apply for a grant.](#)**



## Steering Committee Funders



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## Supporting Funders



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## Advisory Committee

