



## Environment



Prince George's County, Maryland

# Prince George's County Reaches Highest/Recycling Waste Diversion Rate at 59.44 Percent

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*County Moves from 11th to 3rd in the State for Recycling*

**Largo, MD** – Prince George's County residents and businesses are doing their part to keep the County green and on the path to zero waste. According to the latest figures released by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), the County's 2012 recycling rate rose to 54.44 percent with an overall waste diversion rate of 59.44 percent; that equates to a 10.33 percent increase over a one-year period and ranks the County third in the State, narrowly behind Harford and Montgomery Counties. The new data surpasses the 50 percent mark for waste diversion that was set the previous year.

"The residents and businesses in Prince George's County have worked hard to increase the waste diversion rate to an all-time high and deserve a pat on the back," says Adam Ortiz, Director of the Prince George's County Department of Environmental Resources. "We are recycling more, but must also continue to reduce waste at the source by making green decisions every day."

MDE calculates the rate by adding the disposed trash tonnage and the recycling tonnage to provide a total waste number. The recycling tonnage is then divided by the total waste number (tonnage) to obtain the recycling rate. The County saw an increase in recyclable materials comprised of mixed glass (23 percent), mixed plastic (15 percent), corrugated cardboard (11 percent) and composting of mixed yard waste (14 percent). Because of the efforts residents and businesses have made in eliminating waste before it starts, the County received the maximum Source Reduction Credit of 5 percent from MDE. Some examples of source reduction practices include using a mulching lawn mower and leaving chopped up leaves on the lawn, using reusable shopping bags and water bottles and selecting products that contain the least amount of packaging.

“We have our sights on the top spot for Maryland recycling,” said Ortiz. “We have several initiatives that are among the very best practices nationwide for turning trash into treasure.” Factors contributing to the increased recycling and waste diversion rates includes the County’s introduction of a new food scrap composting program for residential, commercial and institutions, “mining” of materials on the landfill, its Single-Stream Materials Recycling Facility that supports commercial and residential programs, Countywide use of the residential 65-gallon wheeled recycling carts and increased community engagement about waste reduction and recycling.

On January 1, 2014, the County put into effect another eco-friendly measure by announcing it would no longer collect yard waste in plastic bags, but in paper yard waste bags only.

For more information on the County’s Recycling Program, source reduction and the yard waste collection plastic bag ban, contact County Click online or dial 3-1-1.

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