



2025 WM Recycling Report Reveals U.S. Recycling "Say-Do Gap," How Corporate Recycling Actions Can Impact Consumer Choices

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Americans feel good about recycling, and company recycling commitments help guide their purchases — even as everyday barriers can limit recycling follow through

HOUSTON, Oct. 30, 2025 /PRNewswire/ -- [WM](#) (NYSE: WM), a leading environmental solutions provider and North America's largest recycler, released its [2025 WM Recycling Report](#), revealing a significant "say-do gap" between Americans' recycling intentions and their actual behaviors. The survey also highlighted that consumer packaged goods (CPG) companies with well-known product brands can influence purchasing decisions by prioritizing recyclability.



Based on a national survey of more than 1,000 consumers and immersive behavioral research in various U.S. markets, the report highlights how positive emotions, everyday rituals and competing priorities shape recycling, and identifies opportunities to make recycling easier, more convenient and more impactful. It also shows that consumers oftentimes favor companies with recycling commitments – such as those that use recycled content in products or businesses that make recycling available.

"The 2025 WM Recycling Report shows us that to truly close the gap between intention and action, recycling providers, consumer packaged goods companies and municipalities need to meet people where they are and understand what influences them to recycle," said Tara Hemmer, chief sustainability officer, WM. "At WM, we are investing in technology, infrastructure and education to help turn good recycling intentions into real, lasting impact — all while working with companies to help them maintain their recycled content commitments and with municipalities to increase recycling access in communities."

The research, which comes ahead of America Recycles Day on November 15, found that Americans today are as committed to recycling as ever, but sometimes life can get in the way of making the effort to recycle. Many respondents also noted that corporate recycling commitments can influence purchasing habits – which is critical as companies purchasing recycled content for use in packaging is imperative to recycling success. Key findings of the report include:

- **A significant "say-do gap":** More than 3 in 4 Americans report they currently recycle, and 7 in 10 say it is easy, but [EPA](#) data shows that based on the materials Americans use today, only 32% of materials are being recycled.
- **Recyclable packaging, recycled content can drive demand:** Nearly two thirds (63%) of Americans say they would be more likely to purchase products from companies that use recycled content in their products, with younger, higher-income consumers as the most likely to reward companies that do so. Additionally, more than 4 in 5 (81%) say they would be more likely to recycle if they knew the materials they recycled were ultimately used to create new products.
- **Americans recognize corporate recycling commitments:** More than 7 in 10 (77%) respondents say they notice when a business has recycling available and nearly half (48%) say that the impact of a company's sustainability goals is a strong factor in purchasing decisions.
- **Recycling creates positive emotions:** Americans are much more likely to link recycling with positive emotions such as satisfaction, optimism and accomplishment, making it a "feel-good" habit.
- **Knowledge gaps weaken confidence, but interest in learning is high:** While few claim to know what happens to their recycling after pick-up, nearly 3 in 4 people would be interested in learning more: a sentiment that holds true across all age groups.

The 2025 WM Recycling Report reinforces recycling as a shared responsibility — spanning businesses, policymakers, local municipalities and consumer households to help expand recycling education, access and action. As North America's largest recycler, WM empowers its customers to grow recycling capabilities through its expertise and innovative solutions. WM also continues investing to modernize recycling facilities with advanced technology nationwide, supporting its goal of recovering 25 million tons of material annually by 2030.

Read the full [2025 WM Recycling Report here](#).

2025 WM RECYCLING REPORT METHODOLOGY

Qualitative Study Methodology

This report synthesizes insights gathered from in-person interviews and online responses; it includes direct quotes and photos from participants including over 30 individuals from diverse geographic locations, including Dallas, Texas; Denver, Colo.; Fort Walton, Fla.; and Nashville, Tenn. Over

three days, Further&Further – a third-party research team focused on human-centric and authentic behavioral studies – engaged these participants in online discussions to understand their perspectives on recycling and their daily lives. From this group, six individuals were selected for an in-person, week-long immersion to gain a deeper understanding of their stories, priorities and approaches to waste and recycling.

Quantitative Study Methodology

The quantitative survey was conducted online within the United States, from September 3-4, 2025, among 1,107 U.S. consumers 18+ via the HarrisX Overnight Poll. Respondents for the Poll are recruited through opt-in, web-panel recruitment sampling. Recruitment occurs through a broad variety of professional, validated respondent panels to expand the sampling frame as widely as possible and minimize the impact of any given panel on recruiting methods.

The results are intended to reflect a nationally representative sample of Americans ages 18+. Results were weighted for age, gender, region, race/ethnicity, income, political party, education, ideology and area type where necessary to align them with their actual proportions in the population at the time the survey was conducted. The margin of error for the total sample is +/- 3.0 percentage points.

ABOUT WM

WM (WM.com) is North America's leading provider of comprehensive environmental solutions. Previously known as Waste Management and based in Houston, Texas, WM is driven by commitments to put people first and achieve success with integrity. The company, through its subsidiaries, provides collection, recycling and disposal services to millions of residential, commercial, industrial, medical and municipal customers throughout the U.S. and Canada. With innovative infrastructure and capabilities in recycling, organics and renewable energy, WM provides environmental solutions to and collaborates with its customers in helping them pursue their sustainability goals. In North America, WM has the largest disposal network and collection fleet, is the largest recycler and is a leader in beneficial use of landfill gas, with a growing network of renewable natural gas plants and the most landfill gas-to-electricity plants, as well as the largest heavy-duty natural gas truck fleet in the industry. WM Healthcare Solutions provides collection and disposal services of regulated medical waste and secure information destruction services in the U.S., Canada and Western Europe. To learn more about WM and the company's sustainability progress and solutions, visit Sustainability.WM.com.

Forward Looking Statements

This press release contains forward-looking statements, including all statements regarding future events, future investments and all outcomes or benefits of such investments. Such statements are based on the facts and circumstances as of the date the statements are made and are subject to risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results to be materially different. Please see Part I, Item 1A of the Annual Report on Form 10-K, and subsequent Forms 10-Q, available at investors.wm.com for information regarding such risks and uncertainties. WM assumes no obligation to update any forward-looking statement.

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