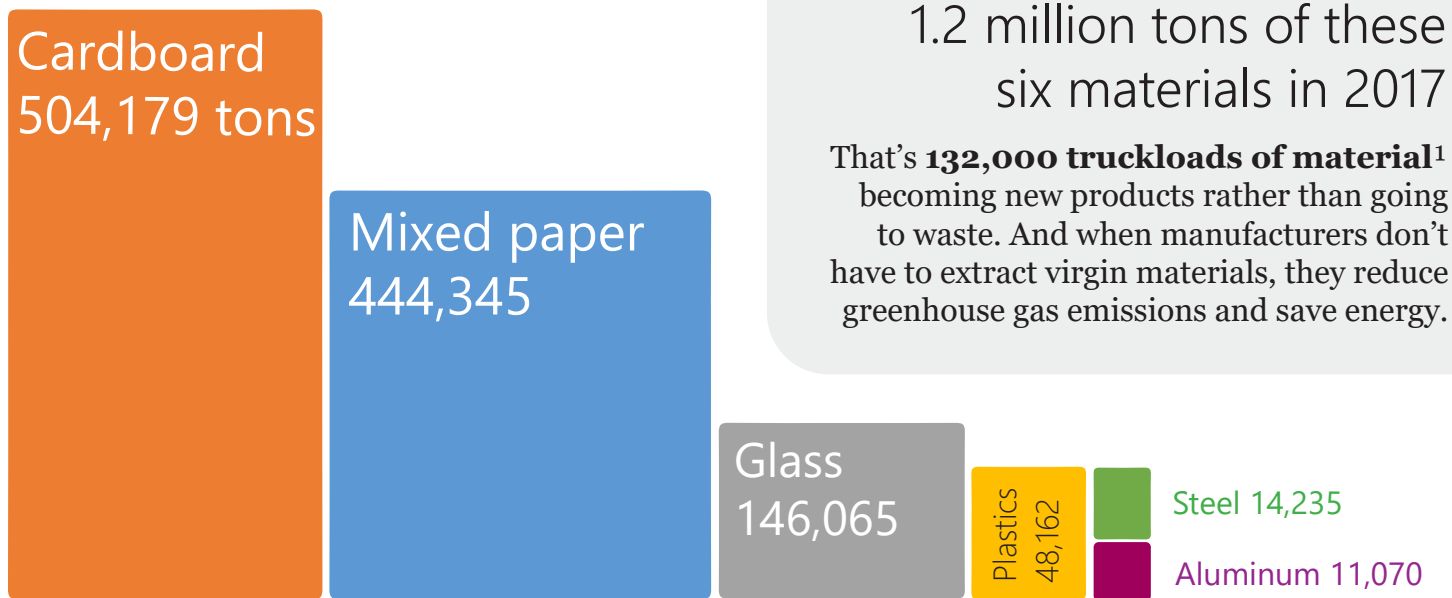


# Environmental benefits of recycling

Thousands of tons of recyclables circulate through Washington’s recycling facilities every day. Recycling not only prevents pollution from landfilling and incinerating materials, it also reduces the environmental burden of extracting and manufacturing virgin materials.

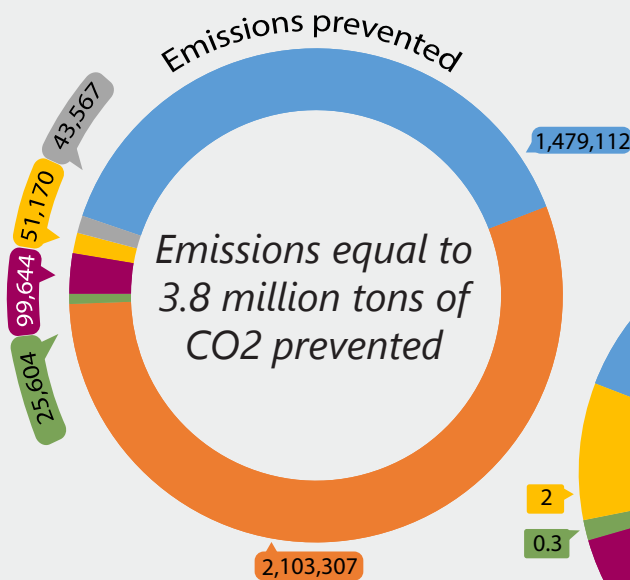
## Common recyclables in 2017



Washingtonians recycled 1.2 million tons of these six materials in 2017. That’s **132,000 truckloads of material**<sup>1</sup> becoming new products rather than going to waste. And when manufacturers don’t have to extract virgin materials, they reduce greenhouse gas emissions and save energy.

## Recycling prevents greenhouse gases

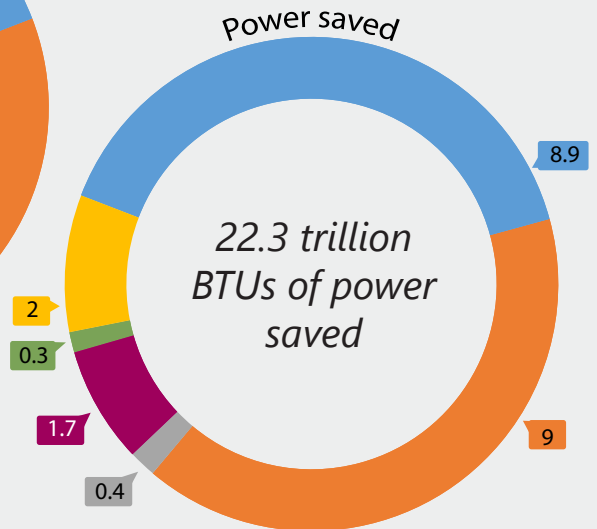
It would take **5 million acres of forest**<sup>3</sup> to absorb the emissions saved by recycling these materials – more than double the size of the Olympic, Mount Rainier and North Cascades national parks combined.



Washingtonians sent 49 percent of their municipal solid waste to recycling and other waste recovery methods in 2017.

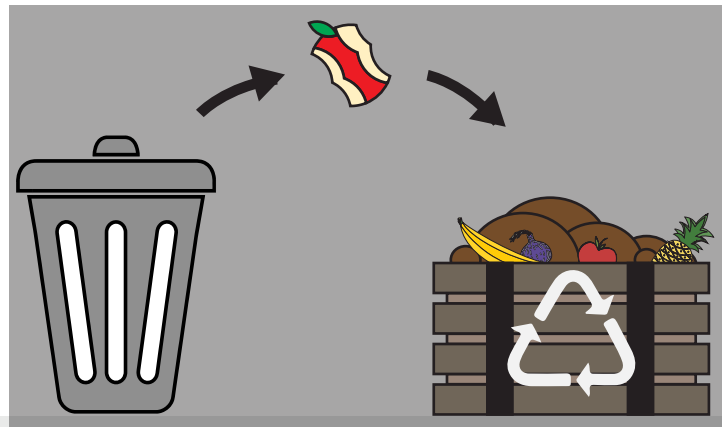
## And saves energy

Recycling these six materials saved enough energy to power nearly **243,000 homes**<sup>2</sup> for a year.



# Recycling organics feeds compost instead of landfills

Washingtonians recovered **2.2 million tons** – that’s 189,000 truckloads<sup>1</sup> – of organics in 2017. Composted food scraps and yard debris reduced greenhouse gases by **47,000 passenger vehicles<sup>2</sup>** driven for a year.



Up to **43 percent** of residential waste in Washington could be composted.

Washingtonians create **12.8 pounds** of waste per person per day

6.6 lbs  
6.2 lbs



6.2 pounds to **waste recovery** and 6.6 pounds to **landfills**

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## Recycling is only one piece of the puzzle

Recycling is an essential piece of the puzzle, but it’s not the whole picture. Our goal is to reduce environmental impacts, including climate impacts, through all stages of a product’s life cycle – not only its end stage.

Sources:

1. [www.waste360.com/blog/how-green-was-my-garbage-truck](http://www.waste360.com/blog/how-green-was-my-garbage-truck).
2. EPA Waste Reduction Model (WARM): <https://www.epa.gov/warm>.
3. EPA's greenhouse gas equivalencies calculator: [www.epa.gov/energy/greenhouse-gas-equivalencies-calculator](http://www.epa.gov/energy/greenhouse-gas-equivalencies-calculator).

To request ADA accomodation, visit <https://ecology.wa.gov/accessibility>, call Ecology at 360-407-6000, Relay Service 711, or TTY 877-833-6341.