

House Republican Press Release

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Press Office: 860-240-8700

**A VIEW FROM THE INSIDE State Representative Ruth Fahrbach**



**The business of recycling has come  
a long way**

Recycling, whether it is beverage containers or other plastics and metals, has come a long way since the early days of the push for environmentally-friendly recycling efforts some two decades ago. But, we still have a long way to go.

According to the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Web site, each one of us (at home, at work, etc.) produces over five pounds of solid waste each day - just over one pound of that gets recycled, and the rest, about four pounds, gets trashed. This adds up to almost 3/4 ton of trash disposed per person, per year. In a state with over 3 million residents, this means we generate close to 4,000,000 tons of municipal solid waste (MSW) each year and dispose almost 2,600,000 tons.

The DEP Web site ([www.ct.gov/dep](http://www.ct.gov/dep)) points out that the way we handle our solid waste has changed dramatically over the past 25 years. As recently as 1975, an amazing 140 of Connecticut's 169 towns disposed of their trash within their own borders.

As recently as the early 1990s, it became apparent that dozens of municipal landfills would have to close. Many had reached their permitted capacity, while others were unable to meet new federal regulatory requirements for modern sanitary landfills. Some even posed a contamination threat to drinking water supplies.

Since then, an increased focus on the need for and the benefits of recycling by the legislature and the DEP has helped address the landfill problem and has made our state more environment-friendly.

The business of recycling larger items like appliances and vehicles has also taken off in the last couple of decades. During 2007 legislation was passed to encourage the recycling of electronic equipment in Connecticut (PA 07-189).

According to the Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries, Inc. ([www.biggerthanthebin.org](http://www.biggerthanthebin.org)), scrap recycling of larger items has turned into a \$65 billion industry, recycling 150 million tons of scrap annually.

Two out of three pounds of steel made in the U.S. is manufactured using recycled scrap, and a total 60 percent of the metals and alloys produced in the U.S. are made from recycled scrap. Recent independent research shows there is enough material to meet domestic manufacturers' demand for recycled materials for the foreseeable future.

As the data indicates, recycling is not just good for the environment, but for business growth and employment as well. You can do your part to reduce the waste stream by recycling. The DEP website offers a great deal of information on recycling. If you do not have access to a computer and would like additional information on recycling, please contact my office at 240-8700 or [ruth.fahrbach@housegop.ct.gov](mailto:ruth.fahrbach@housegop.ct.gov).

*State Rep. Ruth Fahrbach represents the 61<sup>st</sup> District, including Suffield, and parts of Windsor and East Granby, in the General Assembly.*