

Recycling Program

Purpose

To debate whether a town should begin using a curbside recycling program that requires residents to separate their recyclables by type

Background

Americans produce over 181 million metric tons (200 million tons) of trash every year. As a result, the country's landfills are filling up at an alarming rate.



Almost 80 percent of what Americans throw away is recyclable. Recycling can keep trash out of landfills, help conserve natural resources, and reduce pollution. It does have a few drawbacks though, including the high cost of building, operating, and maintaining recycling facilities. Curbside recycling programs can also add several dollars to a family's waste removal bill each month. Some recycling programs allow all types of materials to be dumped together, while others require the materials to be sorted by type.

Situation

The landfill in Greentown is filling up fast. Soon, there will be no place to put the trash that the town's citizens throw away. Instead of building a new landfill, the city's mayor has decided to look into starting up a curbside recycling program.

After researching several options, Mayor Verde is recommending a recycling program that would require citizens to purchase three bins—one for glass and metal, one for plastic, and one for paper. Homeowners would need to sort their recyclables before placing them in the bins. They would also be expected to wash food from all containers.

Proposal

Greentown should adopt a recycling program that requires homeowners to wash and sort recyclables.

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Pro Card

Who I am:

What's important to me:

Why I like this idea:

 Science a-z

Con Card

Who I am:

What's important to me:

Why I do not like this idea:

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Pro Card

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Pro Card

Who you are: Mayor Verde of Greentown

What's important to you: Beautifying the city and saving money

Why you like this idea:

1. The landfill smells bad and is ugly. Building another landfill may cause people to move away.
2. The city can sell some of the presorted materials, making this program cost-effective.

Science a-z

Con Card

Who you are: Levi Levy, a tax-paying citizen

What's important to you: Low taxes

Why you do not like this idea:

1. The city will probably increase your property taxes to help pay for the new recycling plant.
2. If the recycling program fails, the plant will have to close. Greentown will have an empty building that taxpayers will be responsible for maintaining.

Science a-z

Pro Card

Who you are: Estrella Ecosystem, an environmentalist

What's important to you: Saving resources

Why you like this idea:

1. Fewer materials will have to be mined or made if homeowners recycle.
2. Recycling saves energy. For example, it takes less energy to make new aluminum cans from old ones than to process new aluminum.

Science a-z

Con Card

Who you are: Paco Papa, a working parent

What's important to you: Finding a recycling program that is convenient and easy to use

Why you do not like this idea:

1. As a busy working parent, you do not have time to wash and sort your recyclables.
2. You would prefer central bins in the middle of town. You could easily drop off your recyclables on your usual trips around town.

Science a-z

Pro Card

Who you are: Carly Calculator, an economist

What's important to you: Jobs

Why you like this idea:

1. If the town adopts this program, a recycling plant will have to be built. This will create new construction jobs.
2. Once the new plant is up and running, more jobs will need to be added to operate and maintain it.

Science a-z

Con Card

Who you are: Reggie Refuse, a landfill owner

What's important to you: Making a profit

Why you do not like this idea:

1. If residents start recycling, you will see a decrease in business.
2. A decrease in business means that you will have to increase your prices to the trash-removal company. That company will likely pass this increase on to consumers.

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