



N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources

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Website Shows Link Between Recycling and Climate Change

RALEIGH – According to Ecoville’s environmental benefits calculator, in 2009 North Carolina citizens saved 8,662,637 million BTUs of energy statewide, or the equivalent energy content of approximately 1.5 million barrels of oil.

Ecoville’s (<http://nc.myecoville.com/>) environmental benefits calculator is based on EPA’s WAste Reduction Model and illustrates that recycling saves energy thereby decreasing greenhouse gas emissions. WARM allows solid waste planners and organizations to track and report greenhouse gas emission reductions from different waste management practices.

Harmful gases such as carbon dioxide are emitted from the burning of fossil fuels. As a result of North Carolina’s recycling 613,504 tons of material last year, the state’s residents have prevented 848,670 metric tons of carbon dioxide from being released into the atmosphere.

Saving energy lessens our impacts on climate change, a growing concern for the environment. In most cases, less energy is used to produce new products from recycled materials. For example, recycled aluminum production uses 95 percent less energy to manufacture products than using bauxite ore. Additionally, steel made from recycled scraps uses 75 percent less energy than extracting iron ore to make steel.

“The ability to use recycled material decreases our reliance on raw materials to make products,” said Kelley Dennings, education and outreach project manager for the N. C. Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance. “Therefore, less fossil fuels are burned in order to provide the energy to manufacture products made from virgin materials.”

DPPEA partnered with the Carolina Recycling Association, Curbside Value Partnership, Coca-Cola and Ecoville to create a website specific to North Carolina on Ecoville’s site at <http://nc.myecoville.com/>. Parts of WARM are embedded into the site so recycling staff and citizens can view how much energy is being saved, and how much the municipality’s greenhouse gas reductions total due to its recycling efforts.

Using 2009 annual report recycling data, DPPEA ranked North Carolina counties in relation to how much energy each has saved by recycling. The rankings, from the Ecoville site, take into account only common household recyclables, and do not include items such as construction and demolition debris, yard waste, household hazardous waste or electronic material. Therefore, the counties who rank the highest for recycling may not correlate to the highest Ecoville environmental calculator ranking.

A list detailing the energy saved in BTUs for each county is shown here - http://www.p2pays.org/climatechange/docs/NC_EPA_WARMranking.pdf. For more information on county and state recycling data and greenhouse gas reduction statistics, visit <http://nc.myecoville.com>.

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