

Recycling Plastics

Why we care

This summer marks the start of expanded curbside collection for plastics in the Portland Metro area, but there are still a few items that can't go in those recycling carts, including plastic bags, boxes, trays and block Styrofoam. One option is to store these items and take them to a Plastic Roundup or recycling facility such as Far West Fibers. But is the drive worth the environmental cost of the gas to get there?

Energy experts have calculated the embodied energy in the plastics relative to the energy to transport them. They say that for every five pounds of plastic saved, you could drive eight miles to a recycling depot and still save energy!

Simple, positive change

1. Prevent waste in the first place:

- Avoid purchasing products that come in boxes or blister packs. When you can't, leave the packaging in the store and communicate to the sales clerk why you are doing so.
- Instead of purchasing meat pre-packed in a Styrofoam tray and plastic wrap, go to a meat counter and ask the butcher to wrap the meat in paper.
- Choose restaurants and cafeterias that use durable dishes. Or take your own containers for take-out meals.

2. Store the items mentioned above and make periodic trips to a Plastic Roundup or to Far West Fibers in Northeast or Southeast Portland, Beaverton, or Hillsboro. Call 234-3000 for dates, hours, and locations.

Questions or feedback? Contact Jeanne Roy at jeanne@earthleaders.org.