

Good for the environment—and good for the economy

You know recycling is good for the environment; it reduces energy consumption, decreases pollution and saves natural resources. But did you know recycling also is good for our economy? The recycling industry creates local jobs, saves localities money through reduced disposal fees, produces economic development opportunities and generates tax revenue.

When you recycle, you're supporting regional manufacturers that depend on recycled plastic, glass, metal and paper to make new consumer goods such as outdoor decking, park benches, glass containers and paper. The Southeast Recycling Development Council (SERDC) is a non-profit organization represented by 11 southern states, including Virginia. In a 2010 study, the group determined that Virginia is home to more than 15 manufacturers that rely on the materials you put into the recycling bins. These companies generate more than \$3.6 billion in yearly sales and employ more than 3,700 Virginians directly in the manufacture of recycled content products.

And that's just a sliver of the state's whole recycling pie. The more cans, paper, plastics and glass that are put in the recycling bin instead of the trash, the more the region's economy will benefit.

"If Virginia recycled just 10 percent more materials each year, the potential economic impact would equate to 1,600 new jobs, an additional \$75 million in annual personal income and \$3 million in annual state tax revenue," said SERDC Executive Director Will Sagar.

Future growth in the recycling industry depends on supply assurance, and we all play a critical role. Remember, it's not just about putting things in the recycling bin; it's about putting the proper materials in the bin. Support our local economy by recycling smart! Start by learning more at askHRgreen.org, your go-to source for all things green in Hampton Roads