

Questions and Answers About Recycling

What is DefendRecycling.org?

DefendRecycling.org is the advocacy Web site of the Indiana Recycling Coalition (IRC). When the IRC was asked its opinion by top state environmental officials, our board weighed in with some serious questions on a proposed “draft” plan to overhaul recycling standards. Not all of our questions have been answered. That’s why we’re taking it to the public. You’ll see that other groups listed as “advocates” on this Web site are already weighing in and raising similar questions—both state and national groups.

What is happening at the state level?

The proposed Senate Bill 154 directs the Environmental Quality Service Council, an advisory group, to “study and make findings and recommendations” about “the definition of recycling, including an investigation of waste to energy definitions.” But other bills could be introduced this session to give these companies special credits and grants under Indiana law. The state has already floated policy changes and a related rule making through other boards based on a push from special interest groups and industries seeking that favorable status. Weigh in with your legislator at www.DefendRecycling.org.

What will happen if the state dramatically alters recycling standards?

Established Indiana businesses could suddenly become ineligible for state assistance and may have to lay off workers and close. Municipalities may no longer be able to offer affordable recycling services to residents. Successful programs could fall to the wayside if state funds are diverted to support risky burn technologies. No one can easily predict how a loss of state funds will trickle down to hurt urban and rural communities, but the state needs to make that potential financial impact part of its review.

What’s happening across the country?

Indiana, together with all the other states and the EPA, does not recognize burn technologies and waste-to-energy as recycling—it is disposal. Period. EPA standards have always called for waste prevention, reduction and recycling. Those are the real solutions to managing waste and saving energy. This policy has set the national tone for recycling standards for more than two decades. If the materials we now gather to recycle suddenly become garbage again, what’s the incentive to keep recycling? Successful recycling businesses have told us the state’s agenda is “backwards” and “narrow minded.

For more information, visit www.DefendRecycling.org