



2022 RECYCLING REPORT

EXPANDED POLYSTYRENE TRANSPORT PACKAGING

In 2022, 168.6 million pounds (76,488 metric tons) of expanded polystyrene (EPS) was diverted from the landfill in North America, including 61.6 million pounds (27,940 metric tons) of post-consumer EPS. Recycled EPS packaging is used in numerous end-markets like safety helmets, furniture, new packaging, and automotive applications among others. Stable market value, increasing investment in collection infrastructure, recycling technology innovations and collaborative community programs are driving growth in EPS recycling.

The EPS industry is prepared to meet recycled content demand. Collectively, the industry has invested \$185 million in technology innovation to develop recycled content EPS resin. Approximately 79 million pounds of capacity are already operational, with an additional 150 million planned for the future.



61.6 Million

(27,940 METRIC TONS)
POST-CONSUMER EPS
RECYCLED

The United Nations Environment Program's Plastic Pollution Science Report acknowledges that EPS transport packaging is recyclable in-practice & at-scale in certain global regions.

31% RECYCLING RATE

31

EPS densifier grants in 31 cities provide access to 12.4 million representing a 67% increase in population reach since this initiative was launched in 2019. Grant applications are accepted annually by the [Foam Recycling Coalition](#).

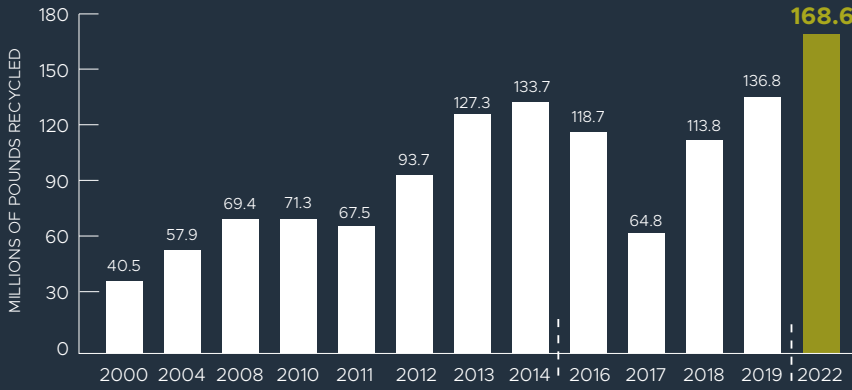
11.5 million

Foam Cycle, a turnkey community recycling system for expanded polystyrene (EPS) foam is now operating in 12 states with 29 locations serving a combined population of 11.5 million.

60

60 new EPS drop-off locations came online in the past 12 months. Check [EPS-IA's North American Recycling Map](#) to see where EPS is being recycled at more than 400 locations.

U.S. EPS Recycling 2000-2022*



*Data not collected in 2015, 2020-2021 due to lack of respondents.



METHODOLOGY

The 2022 Expanded Polystyrene Recycling Report was conducted by Resource Recycling Systems, Inc. Participation in the EPS recycling survey is voluntary and the data is based on the responses received. Since there is not 100 percent participation, the totals do not capture all EPS being recycled. The *2022 Plastics Industry Producers' Statistics Group Report*, compiled by Vault Consulting, LLC, was used to determine the recycling denominator using EPS resin sales for custom shape molded applications.

EPS custom shape applications include packaging, agricultural products, refrigeration, and other non-packaging products. In addition, some EPS packaging is made from block molds using hot wire cutting to make cushioning components. This is the best available data to determine a recycling rate, representing a conservative number based on the percentage of each manufacturing method dedicated to packaging production.

The survey was conducted in accordance with ISO 14021 definitions.

- **Post-Consumer:** material generated by households or by commercial, industrial, and institutional facilities in their role as end-users of the product which can no longer be used for its intended purpose. This includes returns of material from the distribution chain.
- **Pre-Consumer:** material diverted from the waste stream during a manufacturing process. Excluded is reutilization of materials such as rework, regrind, or scrap generated in a process and capable of being reclaimed within the same process that generated it.

Because ISO recycling definitions have not been adopted by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), this report only considers post-consumer material to determine the rate percentage.

2022 TOTAL RECYCLED

168.6 MILLION LBS
(76,488 METRIC TONS)

61.6
Million



POST-CONSUMER
(27,940 METRIC TONS)

107
Million



PRE-CONSUMER
(48,548 METRIC TONS)

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