

# Sustainability Advocacy Group



**HRSD**  
Cleaning wastewater every day for a better Bay.



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## Reduce - Reuse - Recycle *The Order Matters*

*By: Christel Dyer*

Everyone has heard the classic conservation motto: **Reduce, Reuse, Recycle**. Most however, do not put much thought into the fact that the three R's are listed in that particular order for a reason.

**Reduce** - The first "R" can make the largest, most positive impact on the environment. If we reduce what we use, the energy, water, and resources that normally would go into making the product would never be expended. The thought process is to cut back on what we purchase and use only what is needed. For example, using a refillable water bottle and refilling it with filtered tap water, instead of purchasing bottled water, reduces one's carbon footprint and impact on the environment, in both the resources and energy used to make and fill the plastic bottle. To produce one unit of bottled water requires nearly three times the amount of water to create the plastic bottle, cap, and label! Besides avoiding bottle water where possible, we can also reduce our environmental impact by using double-sided printing, purchasing items that are built to last and items with minimal packaging, and by purchasing electronics that will use less energy.

**Reuse** - The second "R" is still better than recycling because you are re-purposing an item for another use without consuming significantly more resources. Pinterest fans have unlimited access to reuse projects as simple as repurposing toilet paper rolls into binoculars for kids to using old pallets to create a table and chairs. There are entire websites dedicated to repurposing or [upcycling](#). You can also purchase repurposed materials from sites such as Etsy. The concept of reuse forms the basis of the current SAG HRSD Challenge.

**Recycle** - This is the costlier option of the three "R's" and is tricky in regards to educating people on how to recycle materials. For instance, in Hampton Roads, only #1 and #2 plastics are recycled in all localities, but a lot of products we use every day are packaged in #5 and #7 plastics. Special provisions must be made to recycle items such as batteries, plastic bags, electronics, ink cartridges, and even textiles. Recycling is important in keeping materials out of the landfill and in reducing the need for raw materials. [Be like Carter](#), and put an emphasis on recycling!



This bracelet by [Planet Love Life](#) is made from repurposed marine debris (nautical rope) obtained from beach clean-up efforts.



"If 25 years ago I had said that the majority of Canadians would be drinking bottled water today, you would have laughed. If I were to say now that we may have to breathe bottled air in 25 years if we don't fundamentally change the way our society works, would you laugh?"

- Jim Harris,  
Author and  
Leader of  
Canada's Green  
Party 2003 - 2006

For additional information on the three "R's", please visit the EPA and NRDC websites.

[NRDC article - This Green Life](#)

[EPA's Reducing and Reusing Basics](#)

## 2015 HRPDC Recycle Data

By: Laura Kirkwood

On behalf of HRSD, The SAG reports recycle data to HRPDC (Hampton Roads Planning District Commission) yearly which is compiled into a large report on the “State of Recycling” in the region. The HRPDC, one of 21 Planning District Commissions in the Commonwealth of Virginia, is a regional organization representing this area's seventeen local governments. The purpose of planning district commissions is to encourage and facilitate local government cooperation and state-local cooperation to help solve big problems like ‘too much waste.’ See table below for the amount of recycled material reported to HRPDC in 2015.

Material	2015 Recycled Amount	Where does the material go?
Incinerator Ash	7297 dry tons	Bethel Landfill to be used as alternate daily cover
Land-applied Biosolids	3671 dry tons	Farms in Virginia Beach and Chesapeake
Composted Biosolids	4695 dry tons	McGill Waverly Composting Facility
Mixed Recycle	208 tons	Sorted at Waste Management / TFC Recycling Facilities and Sold to Various Companies
Used Tires	8 tons	North American Tire Recycling
Used Engine Oil	2600 gallons	C&M Industries
Salvaged Metals	156 tons	Old Dominion Metal Inc.
Lab Plastics	2 tons	Boomerang Recycling <sup>a</sup>
Plastic Bags / Batteries	Not tracked on a regular basis <sup>b</sup>	Bags go to local grocers with recycling programs / Batteries go to Wise Recycling LLC

<sup>a</sup>Boomerang Recycling no longer takes HRSD’s laboratory plastics so we are looking for another company willing to take them, especially containers made of plastics #3 through #7.

<sup>b</sup>Although all work centers collect these items, there is not a consistent/automated way to track these items.

**HRSD personnel do a great job of finding avenues for recycling our unused material and we are always looking for more suggestions!** Contact the Sustainability Inbox/Team Lead at [Sustainability@hrsd.com](mailto:Sustainability@hrsd.com) or the Entire Team at [SAGTeam@hrsd.com](mailto:SAGTeam@hrsd.com) with your suggestions.

# FACT

*Vitality Air, a Canadian startup, made headlines in 2015 for selling bottled air to Chinese struggling with poor air quality and is currently exploring the market for bottled air in India. Poor air quality is only one of the many consequences if globally we ignore the advice to*

**Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.**