GLASS RECYCLING COALITION

TALKING POINTS FOR GLASS CHAMPIONS

1. According to a 2018 study by the Glass Recycling Coalition, 90% of consumers and residents expect to be able to recycle their glass*. Currently, 81% of U.S. recycling programs include glass options for residents.

2. ***Glass recycling helps to preserve limited natural resources by reducing raw material use, reduces energy consumption as recycled glass melts at lower temperatures than raw materials.*** Glass recycling saves money by reducing landfill tons, and reduces air emissions. Bottle-to-bottle is best end-use, followed by fiberglass, then alternative uses—all save resources/energy.

3. Glass recycling programs can include container deposit systems, single-stream and dual-stream collection, drop-off, bar and restaurant programs, etc. ***Successful glass recycling programs consider a variety of elements like local recycling infrastructure and proximity to end markets.*** Currently, there is not one universal fix to improve glass recycling in the U.S. Glass recycling solutions are locally-based, as is true with other recycling commodities.

4. There are opportunities for regional collaboration for glass recycling and end markets. Communities have opportunities to work within their region for a central collection point for glass.

5. While many recyclables rely on export markets, ***the end market for recycled glass is primarily domestic.*** Recycling glass containers helps U.S. glass container and fiberglass manufacturing plants remain competitive and protects US jobs.

6. ***Broken glass is not an issue for end markets.*** Historically, only glass 3/8" and larger were recoverable, but new processing technologies and end markets mean all glass fragments can be recycled pending reduced contamination levels. Recycling collection and sorting equipment with cleaning systems can handle one color, as well as mixed color, glass containers.

7. ***End markets need a consistent supply of quality glass bottles and containers to make cullet or recycled glass.*** Most glass containers collected curbside or commercially will need additional processing before manufactured into new containers or fiberglass.

8. ***Recycling revenue for commodities fluctuate.*** Glass is no different, but its pricing is highly dependent on the amount of contamination (i.e., 99% glass with 1% contamination material has a higher value than 50% glass with 50% contamination). Glass can be separated from fines, dirt, shredded paper, bottle caps and are likely to find an end market, like new containers or fiberglass.

*Data from a 2018 survey of 300+ municipal, material recovery facilities and glass industry professionals.

GLASS RECYCLING COALITION

RISKS OF REMOVING GLASS CONTAINERS FROM THE ACCEPTABLE RECYCLING PROGRAM ARE:

- Disapproval from residents, who expect to be able to recycle their glass containers. Most residents view glass as a core recyclable along with paper, plastic bottles and aluminum cans.
- Lack of confidence in recycling overall, mixed messaging to residents on what is and is not recyclable, and ultimately, the risk of difficulty reinstating glass recycling as part of future collection programs.
- Residents are likely to continue placing glass in their recycling bins, which may result in rejected loads at the materials recovery facility increasing costs for contamination.
- Local governments will pay increased landfill tipping fees as the heavy weight of glass containers is removed from the recycling mix.
- Use GRC's decision-making tool to help guide you to resources available to make an informed decision:

CONTRACT CONSIDERATIONS:

If your existing or new contract includes glass on your list of acceptable items, inquire about nearby markets for glass. Check out GRC's market map for insights in your area:

- Ask if the material recovery facility has implemented glass cleaning equipment that removes glass early to make it more marketable.
- Establish a measurement system for glass sold post-MRF processing so that you can understand if the glass value has gone down or if the contamination has gone up. Consider establishing a contractual max contamination level to increase value.
- If a lower price there is being offered to remove glass make sure you understand the entire supply chain impacts and consider the above consequences for removing glass for additional education, potential non-compliance and overall confusion for your recycling program.

WHY USE GLASS?:

- Glass does not pose a threat to the world's oceans and our food chain.
- Recycling glass has big environmental payoffs as well—it saves raw materials, lessens demand for energy, and cuts CO2 emissions.
- Plastic bottles and even aluminum cans are lined with plastic. Glass is a natural healthy choice. Glass is the only packaging material certified by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration as "generally regarded as safe."
- Most glass customers and suppliers are within 300 miles of production plants.
- Recycling one ton of glass is equal to eight jobs
- Recycling glass saves raw materials — Over a ton of natural resources are conserved for every ton of glass recycled, including 1,300 pounds of sand, 410 pounds of soda ash, 380 pounds of limestone, and 160 pounds of feldspar.

GLASS RECYCLING COALITION

ABOUT THE GLASS RECYCLING COALITION:

The Glass Recycling Coalition (GRC) aims to promote glass recycling best practices, strengthen glass markets, provide results-oriented resources for communities and manufacturers and collaborate to build a strong foundation for successful glass recycling.