

Press Release

For Immediate Release: Thursday, November 13

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Some Colorado cities see recycling, composting surge according to new report from Eco-Cycle and CoPIRG

Cities and businesses forge ahead as state is poised for significant improvements to recycling in 2026

DENVER - Colorado—led by local champions, businesses and communities—continues to make significant progress on recycling, compost and reuse, as the state begins to implement a transformative Producer Responsibility recycling program in 2026. The 9th annual [State of Recycling and Composting report](#), released by Zero Waste advocates Eco-Cycle and CoPIRG Foundation, found significant advances in recycling and composting in communities like Denver, Longmont, Aspen and Boulder, demonstrating that prioritizing Zero Waste strategies can lead to big jumps in recycling, composting and reuse.

“It makes no sense to keep extracting natural resources only to bury them in landfills instead of recycling them into new products, or to discard organic material that could be made into compost to restore soils and strengthen local agriculture,” said **Suzanne Jones, Executive Director of Eco-Cycle**. “Across Colorado, communities, businesses, and local leaders are proving there’s a better way. Together, we’re taking collective action to build systems that do make sense—a statewide recycling program that will provide free access for all Coloradans and create local jobs, composting that supports farmers and builds climate resilience, and state policies and local programs that are laying the foundation for a truly circular materials management system in Colorado.”

“We call it waste but so much of the trash we produce is either unnecessary and can be eliminated with better designed products, or is valuable and can be repaired, reused, recycled or composted into something useful,” said **Danny Katz, CoPIRG Foundation executive director**. “In 2025, we saw that when Colorado communities prioritize diverting valuable materials away from landfills, it works. We are able to increase recycling rates or create compost that is great for our farms, gardens and parks.”

“Colorado has made significant advances in responsibly protecting our natural resources and supporting our local economy,” said **Colorado Governor Jared Polis**. “Through the Colorado Circular Communities Enterprise, we help local communities and businesses advance toward successfully achieving waste diversion goals. I’m also proud that Colorado is the third US state to adopt Producer Responsibility for packaging, which will begin providing free recycling to every resident of our state starting next year and will double the amount we recycle by 2030. Across Colorado, communities are building strong local economies and implementing climate change solutions at home by reducing, reusing, recycling, and composting.”

“This report uplifts the great progress being made by leaders and communities around the state to improve recycling, composting and reuse programs, policies and infrastructure,” said **Colorado First Gentleman Marlon Reis**. “As the report notes, ‘Change happens person by person, community by community.’ Kudos to the champions from around the state who are the driving force behind these forward-moving efforts in their own communities and our state.”

The [State of Recycling and Composting in Colorado report](#), released to celebrate [America Recycles Day](#) and Colorado Recycles Week, highlighted a number of leading cities and businesses that reported significant improvements in waste diversion over the last year as they build programs and implement policies that will continue to drive even more diversion into the future, including:

- In 2024, **Longmont increased their business and multifamily waste diversion rate from 35% to 59%** after implementing its Universal Recycling Ordinance.
- In 2024, **Aspen’s Organic Waste Ordinance**, which requires food establishments like restaurants, grocery stores and coffee shops to divert the organics they produce away from landfills, has resulted in a **nearly 350% increase in food scraps being made into compost to be used to enhance local soils**.
- In 2024, **Denver’s residential compost program** expanded hauling services citywide **to serve a total of 75,000 homes**, increasing **organics diversion by 55%**.
- Since the **City of Boulder’s** deconstruction ordinance took effect in July 2020, the program has diverted over **105,000 tons from the landfill**, which is 76% of all materials from deconstructed buildings. These materials include lumber, asphalt, concrete and metals.
- In 2024, **Perks Reclaimed**, a deconstruction business located in Commerce City **recovered 261,857 pounds of building materials for reuse and an additional 838,140 pounds for recycling into new products** from 208 deconstruction projects in 2024 alone.
- At a statewide level, in 2024, Colorado expanded programs and added increased capacity to divert woody material from landfills, achieving a 50% increase in woody material diversion—**from 250,000 to 375,000 tons in one year**. Woody material such as tree

branches, pallets and clean lumber can be turned into mulch or composted and used to build soil health rather than being landfilled and emitting greenhouse gases.

Even bigger changes are coming in 2026, when the state begins to implement a Producer Responsibility program, which will ensure that the largest companies making everyday products that Coloradans buy will help pay for the recycling of the boxes, cans, bottles and paper that those products come in. The program is expected to expand recycling to 500,000 more households in Colorado, with the goal of recycling over 400,000 tons of packaging by 2030, more than twice what we currently recycle.

The report can be found at www.ecocycle.org/SORC.

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Eco-Cycle is a Zero Waste pioneer and one of the nation's oldest and largest nonprofit recyclers. Eco-Cycle innovates, implements, and advocates for local and global Zero Waste solutions to foster a more regenerative, equitable, and climate-resilient future. For more information:

www.ecocycle.org

CoPIRG Foundation - through research, public education and outreach, we serve as counterweights to the influence of powerful special interests that threaten our health, safety or well-being. More at

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