



N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources

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NORTH CAROLINA'S RECYCLING RATES CLIMB SLOWLY

RALEIGH—Despite a robust 6.35 percent increase in North Carolina's waste disposal, recycling from local governments barely managed a four percent increase, according to a recent analysis conducted by the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

According to the annual analysis, growth in the recovery of traditional recyclable materials such as aluminum cans and old newspapers was stagnant, with most of the 49,000 ton rise being attributed to increases in the recovery of scrap tires and yard waste.

“The flat performance of local programs is ironic in the face of the growing appetite for recovered materials by domestic and foreign manufacturers,” said Scott Mouw, chief of the Community and Business Assistance Section of the Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance. “The opportunities have never been greater for local governments to provide more efficient and effective recycling services to their citizens, and we need to see an effort on the part of many communities to do better.”

Strong demand for recovered materials during the year resulted in insufficient supply for many commodities, indicating that local governments should redouble efforts to increase participation and expand the range of materials collected.

The median county per capita recovery, which excludes scrap tires and yard waste, declined slightly to 88.5 pounds per person per year. The average recovery rate over the same period actually increased slightly, indicating that while recovery rates in most programs did not improve, some local governments are finding ways to operate highly effective recovery programs.

“Two critical factors in local government performance are a commitment by community leaders to fund and operate good recycling programs and a commitment by citizens to use those programs,” said Jim Hickman, who oversees the state's technical assistance efforts for county and municipal programs. “The communities that perform well have generally made a higher level of investment in a broader and more efficient range of services and are therefore able to achieve higher recovery rates.”

Dare County maintained the top spot in the county-by-county rankings with a 747 pounds per capita recovery rate. Coastal and mountain communities tend to rank higher on the list due to the impacts of tourism.

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Catawba County’s per capita recovery rate increased by more than 100 pounds per person, moving the county up the list to the number three spot. Much of the increase can be attributed to the investments the county has made in developing an eco-complex at its landfill. The eco-complex serves as an economic development tool that maximizes the use of byproducts generated by businesses located on-site and by the landfill itself.

New Hanover County also experienced a significant increase in per capita recovery, climbing 60 pounds to approximately 201 pounds per person. The county operates a continually-growing construction and demolition waste recovery program that has become quite successful at diverting recyclable materials. Annual recovery of recyclable materials in the county has increased by 70 percent in the last five years.

A list detailing per capita annual recycling rates for each North Carolina county is attached. The totals include tonnage recycled by both county and municipal programs within the county. Yard waste, tires and some special wastes are excluded from the totals to allow consistent comparisons from year to year. For more information, contact Jim Hickman, DPPEA local government assistance team leader, at (919) 715-6528.

	2005-2006	
	Population	Per capita recovery (lbs.)
DARE COUNTY	34,790	747.8724
PITT COUNTY	143,207	518.5474
CATAWBA COUNTY	149,032	475.6432
CAMDEN COUNTY	9,008	418.0262
MCDOWELL COUNTY	43,175	403.0059
BUNCOMBE COUNTY	216,738	377.9164
MACON COUNTY	32,550	359.4581
ORANGE COUNTY	121,991	284.6735
SWAIN COUNTY	13,585	283.9941
NEW HANOVER COUNTY	180,358	201.1995
GUILFORD COUNTY	441,428	193.7526
WATAUGA COUNTY	42,934	182.6142
TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY	29,880	173.0756
IREDELL COUNTY	139,727	166.3859
CRAVEN COUNTY	92,670	156.7746
DUPLIN COUNTY	51,920	156.1348
MADISON COUNTY	20,296	152.1738
YANCEY COUNTY	18,152	150.3184
JACKSON COUNTY	35,752	148.9478
PASQUOTANK COUNTY	38,882	148.1359
ALLEGHANY COUNTY	10,912	144.3915
CARTERET COUNTY	62,760	144.267
PERQUIMANS COUNTY	12,154	142.702
MECKLENBURG COUNTY	796,232	141.182
POLK COUNTY	19,006	132.596
LENOIR COUNTY	58,278	128.5422
MITCHELL COUNTY	15,880	126.7506
DURHAM COUNTY	242,210	126.0339
BRUNSWICK COUNTY	89,463	124.2612
CURRITUCK COUNTY	22,984	121.1051

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2005-2006

	Population	Per capita recovery (lbs.)
PAMLICO COUNTY	13,068	118.7496
WAKE COUNTY	755,034	116.983
CLAY COUNTY	9,876	116.6464
YADKIN COUNTY	37,404	115.1786
HAYWOOD COUNTY	56,595	114.4391
HENDERSON COUNTY	97,792	114.395
UNION COUNTY	161,332	113.4385
GRAHAM COUNTY	8,119	111.5901
DAVIE COUNTY	38,930	109.4631
PENDER COUNTY	46,538	106.4824
CALDWELL COUNTY	78,492	102.774
HERTFORD COUNTY	23,864	102.4832
FORSYTH COUNTY	326,340	102.2201
CHOWAN COUNTY	14,470	102.1133
GATES COUNTY	11,219	100.9716
CHATHAM COUNTY	56,090	100.675
FRANKLIN COUNTY	54,106	97.73075
ALEXANDER COUNTY	35,898	92.20012
LINCOLN COUNTY	69,529	89.91759
LEE COUNTY	53,789	89.00407
WAYNE COUNTY	115,714	87.98987
SCOTLAND COUNTY	36,838	86.35974
SURRY COUNTY	73,028	86.12231
ALAMANCE COUNTY	138,572	85.97826
AVERY COUNTY	18,030	84.76428
ASHE COUNTY	25,500	84.6949
MONTGOMERY COUNTY	27,359	80.6623
RUTHERFORD COUNTY	63,303	79.46101
BURKE COUNTY	88,293	79.455
WILSON COUNTY	76,826	74.96629
CABARRUS COUNTY	150,434	73.71405
COLUMBUS COUNTY	54,524	72.90478
HYDE COUNTY	5,587	72.79399
MOORE COUNTY	80,867	71.65024
ROCKINGHAM COUNTY	91,817	71.00668
BLADEN COUNTY	32,866	66.10601
NASH COUNTY	91,544	64.96395
HOKE COUNTY	40,696	62.25428
CLEVELAND COUNTY	97,056	61.03136
ROWAN COUNTY	133,339	59.06419
JONES COUNTY	10,246	55.67051
DAVIDSON COUNTY	154,294	52.66284
VANCE COUNTY	43,624	52.5596
GREENE COUNTY	20,173	50.04214
WILKES COUNTY	66,897	48.12294
CHEROKEE COUNTY	26,180	45.94805
GRANVILLE COUNTY	53,356	45.90374

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2005-2006

	Population	Per capita recovery (lbs.)
STOKES COUNTY	46,234	45.8909
TYRRELL COUNTY	4,203	45.79586
MARTIN COUNTY	24,580	44.08625
WARREN COUNTY	20,215	43.27974
GASTON COUNTY	193,886	43.24098
RANDOLPH COUNTY	137,283	42.74717
ANSON COUNTY	25,766	40.42304
CUMBERLAND COUNTY	305,173	40.34072
WASHINGTON COUNTY	13,418	37.90282
HARNETT COUNTY	101,608	36.97091
EDGECOMBE COUNTY	53,034	36.592
SAMPSON COUNTY	63,566	33.55033
BEAUFORT COUNTY	46,010	29.41534
PERSON COUNTY	37,125	28.03879
CASWELL COUNTY	23,759	27.43971
ONSLow COUNTY	157,748	26.29612
RICHMOND COUNTY	46,676	25.17354
STANLY COUNTY	58,912	24.96843
HALIFAX COUNTY	56,253	24.37737
JOHNSTON COUNTY	146,312	21.5739
BERTIE COUNTY	19,640	17.02444
NORTHAMPTON COUNTY	21,568	11.59774
ROBESON COUNTY	127,695	6.895337

Average FY 2005-2006 county recovery: 111.39 lbs. per capita.

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