

Ms. Amber Reppert
34970 Village Road
Clinton Township, Michigan, 48035

Dear Ms. Reppert:

Thank you very much for your letter to President Bush regarding both pollution and litter. The White House has asked that I respond to your letter. One way the United States government is improving the environment, is through increased recycling. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) believes that recycling, and reducing the amount of waste we produce, is important in both reducing litter, and in improving the environment and conserving resources. It is also important to make sure our remaining garbage ends up being disposed of properly in approved landfills or incinerators.

I'd like to share with you the tremendous progress that citizens, community groups, businesses and governments have made in recycling over the last ten years. Thanks to the hard work of this impressive team, our country now recycles over one quarter of the garbage from our homes. In 1998, over 49 million tons of garbage that would have been thrown away, was recycled into new products. This is compared to the 24 million tons that was recycled in 1988, about half of what we recycled in 1998.

State and local governments have also helped to increase the amount of garbage that is recycled. For example, today there are 7,500 programs that pick up recyclable materials at homeowners' curbs. In 1988, there were only 1,000 curbside recycling programs. Now about 120 million people, or almost half of the population of the United States have access to curbside collection programs. There are also over 3,000 facilities in the U.S. that compost grass clippings, leaves, and other yard trimmings. Most of these facilities are run by local governments.

Keep America Beautiful is another organization that works to prevent litter in our towns and cities. Every year Keep America Beautiful sponsors a contest to encourage cities and towns to reduce pollution, and help keep our environment clean. You can find out more about the work that Keep America Beautiful is doing by calling them at (203) 323-8987 or by going to the internet site at www.kab.org

Again, I would like to thank you for your interest in the environment, particularly recycling. I have enclosed several EPA reports that provide additional information on recycling, and how it benefits the environment. Thank you for your concern for the environment.

Sincerely,

Michael Shapiro,
Acting Assistant Administrator

Enclosures

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