

Mr. Joshua G. Obrochta
5335 Fox Path lane
Hoffman Estates, Illinois 60192

Dear Mr. Obrochta:

I am writing in response to your March 10, 1999 letter to the President in which you expressed support for recycling and requested to be made aware of the Administration's policies on recycling municipal solid waste (MSW).

Let me begin by stating that President Clinton has and continues to support recycling and has taken significant actions to ensure that the federal government leads by example. On September 14, 1998, the President issued Executive Order 13101 which directs federal agencies to increase their purchase of products with recycled content and expand collection of recyclables in federal facilities. Since the federal government is such a large consumer of goods, this Executive Order has far-reaching effects on increasing recycling both within government and the commercial sector. I have enclosed a copy of E.O. 13101 for your information. The Order also appoints a Federal Environmental Executive (FEE) who is responsible for ensuring that agencies comply with the provisions of the Order. More information on the program initiatives of the FEE are contained on their website @ www.ofee.gov.

The White House has also implemented its own recycling program. This recycling program includes efforts to recycle in both the residence and the Old Executive Office Building (OEOB). The residence recycling program collects green, brown, and clear glass; plastic containers; newspapers; aluminum; and cardboard. The OEOB program includes newspapers; aluminum; and most office papers. More details of the White House recycling program are contained in the report entitled, "*The Greening of the White House*," which is also available on the FEE website.

The White House has also been active in participating in the annual "America Recycles Day" which takes place each November. This is a nationwide event planned through a partnership between federal, state, and local governments; businesses and industries; and environmental groups to promote the benefits of recycling. Many of the "America Recycles Day" activities are planned under the direction of the White House.

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I agree with the point you made in your letter that people need to be more aware of the benefits of recycling and we have been working with the White House to address this concern. I have enclosed one of the publications we worked on jointly with the Office of the Federal Environmental Executive. This publication provides a brief discussion of some of the energy, environmental, economic, and resource benefits of recycling and is intended to be one of a series of publications on recycling.

EPA has encouraged recycling and other resource conservation approaches since the passage of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act in 1976 and has bolstered these efforts under President Clinton. Our initiatives include a national grant program to create jobs through recycling, technical assistance to states, communities, and businesses on recycling program development, and research to demonstrate the environmental, economic, and social benefits of recycling.

For recycling to succeed, it is important that consumers, including government, businesses, and individuals, buy and use products made from recycled materials. EPA supports a number of activities to encourage private sector businesses and local governments to purchase products containing recycled material. EPA has funded the U.S. Conference of Mayors' "Buy Recycled" project and the National Recycling Coalition's "Buy Recycled Business Alliance." Four years ago, we launched the "WasteWi\$e" program which challenges the nation's business and manufacturing sectors to reduce and recycle waste and to buy recycled products.

EPA has formed partnerships with many groups to foster recycling. We have supported the Chicago Board of Trade (CBOT) and its partner organizations to link buyers and sellers of recyclables on an electronic cash exchange. EPA also supports initiatives which build the capacity of states to foster recycling and reuse businesses that utilize recyclable and reusable materials which would otherwise be incinerated or landfilled. In 1994, we launched a major new initiative, "Jobs Through Recycling," with the goal to stimulate economic development and create jobs in urban and rural areas while providing the environmental benefits associated with recycling. As part of this initiative, selected states provide assistance to existing businesses to help them convert to using recovered materials as feedstock. The states also facilitate development of new businesses based on the use of recovered materials.

We have also worked with industry trade associations such as the American Forest and Paper Association (AF&PA), the Newspaper Association of America (NAA), the Steel Recycling Institute (SRI), and the Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries (ISRI) on initiatives to encourage increased and more efficient use of recovered materials.

Through our partnerships with these organizations, we have been able to provide information and technical support to influence recycling on a national level.

Recycling has rapidly become an essential part of waste management. Since 1989 the number of curbside recycling programs has risen from 1,100 to more than 7,300. Today, 108 million people, nearly 41 percent of the U.S. population, are served by curbside recycling programs. All sectors of society are involved in recycling - governments, citizens, and businesses. Industry has invested billions of dollars to make structural changes to accommodate the use of recovered materials in their manufacturing processes, which will result in long-term changes in the types of raw materials used in manufacturing.

Recycling remains an integral part of this Administration's overall strategy for managing the nation's municipal solid waste and many of the initiatives started under the President can have a long lasting influence on the future success of recycling. I appreciate your interest in recycling and I hope this letter addresses your concerns.

Sincerely,

Timothy Fields, Jr.
Assistant Administrator

Enclosures

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