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## **Recyclers Recovered Over Five Billion Pounds of Post-consumer Plastic for Recycling in 2022**

### **New Data Demonstrates Need for Recommitment to Recycling**

Recyclers recovered just over five billion pounds of post-consumer plastic for recycling in the United States (U.S.) in 2022 with the vast majority staying in North America to be processed and remanufactured into new products, according to new data released today by the Association of Plastic Recyclers (APR), ISRI, and the U.S. Plastics Pact. Prepared by Stina Inc., and based on surveys conducted by Stina Inc. and the National Association for PET Container Resources (NAPCOR), [the 2022 U.S. Post-consumer Plastic Recycling Data Dashboard](#) details U.S. sourced post-consumer plastic recovered for recycling.

North American reclaimers acquired 93.7 percent of plastic recovered for recycling in the U.S. while export overseas fell to 6.3 percent. Although total volumes recovered were down by 1.4 percent (71.2 million pounds), U.S. reclaimers acquired 21.4 million pounds more U.S. sourced post-consumer plastic over 2021, for a total of 4,307.8 million pounds or 85.9 percent of the total.

The 2022 data shows that the five billion pounds of plastic recovered in 2022 include Bottles (2,784 million pounds, 55.5 percent of total); Non-Bottle Rigid (1,111.8 million pounds, 22.2 percent of total), Film (1,110.3 million pounds, 22.1 percent of total) and “Other Plastics” (11 million pounds, 0.2 percent of total).

While the volumes reported as recovered for recycling in Non-bottle Rigid and Film categories held steady or increased in 2022, as compared to 2021, the volumes in Bottle and Other Plastics categories decreased.

Non-bottle rigid plastic volumes reported increased by 40.8 million pounds, due to an 88.4 million pound increase by North American markets offset by a 47.5 million pound decrease in export to overseas markets. This increased the percent of non-bottle rigid plastic staying in North America to 93.2 percent, up from 88.5 percent in 2021. Most of this increase was due to increased PP recovery reported, both from commingled/other collection (i.e., curbside collection or drop off) and from commercial source-separated or special collection streams. Bottles had the largest decrease of 107.1 million pounds with a decline across all bottle categories. Film had a slight increase overall with some large increases and decreases in individual categories.



“The report reflects what was happening in the manufacturing sector and broader economy during 2022,” said ISRI President Robin Wiener. “Inflation added pressure on consumer goods and markets using recycled plastic, which led to a contractionary period, as measured by Purchasing Managers’ Index (PMI). Less consumer consumption led to less manufacturing and ultimately lower collection volume for certain products. It is encouraging that U.S. reclaimers processed 21.4 million more pounds in 2022 than the previous year.”

“This data is an important benchmark for our industry, finding North American recyclers kept over five billion pounds of plastic out of landfills in 2022,” said APR President & CEO Steve Alexander. “We know we can grow these numbers. APR’s recycler members have the capacity to recycle more material today if they could just get more supply through collection programs. At the same time, the proliferation of new, inexpensive virgin plastic often undermines the demand for recycled materials. We need state and federal policies that ensure minimum recycled content standards for recycled content to advance circularity for plastic.”

"Transparent reporting is crucial for tracking progress and identifying gaps toward a circular future. When reclaimers and other links in the value chain demonstrate self-accountability, it communicates their commitment and integrity toward this collective vision," added Emily Tipaldo, U.S. Plastics Pact Executive Director.

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**The Association of Plastic Recyclers (APR)** is an international non-profit and the only North American organization focused exclusively on improving recycling for plastics. APR’s tools & resources help companies design packaging that can be recycled, support innovations that overcome existing recycling challenges, and encourage stable and reliable markets for post-consumer recycled content. Visit [plasticsrecycling.org](https://plasticsrecycling.org) for more information.

**ISRI** is the *Voice of the Recycled Materials Industry™* representing more than 1,700 companies in the U.S. and 40 countries around the globe. Based in Washington, D.C., ISRI provides advocacy, education, safety and compliance training, and promotes public awareness of the vital role recycled materials play in the U.S. economy, global trade, the environment and sustainable development. Visit [isri.org](https://isri.org) for more information.

**The U.S. Plastics Pact** brings together businesses, not-for-profit organizations, government agencies, and research institutions that work together toward a common vision of a circular economy for plastics, as outlined by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation’s New Plastics Economy Initiative. This vision aims to ensure that plastics never become waste by eliminating the plastics we don’t need, innovating to ensure that the plastics we do



need are reusable, recyclable, or compostable, and circulating all the plastic items we use to keep them in the economy and out of the environment. Visit [www.usplasticspact.org](http://www.usplasticspact.org) for more information.

**Stina Inc.**, previously d.b.a. [More Recycling](http://www.morerecycling.com), is a mission-based research and technology company. that has conducted the annual plastic recycling study for over 10 years for the United States and Canada. Confidentiality and neutrality are the cornerstones to this research, analysis, and reporting. Stina also supports the recycling industry with online tools such as [www.PlasticsMarkets.org](http://www.PlasticsMarkets.org), and [Buy Recycled Products Directory](http://www.BuyRecycledProducts.com), which can be found on [www.CircularityinAction.com](http://www.CircularityinAction.com). Visit [www.stinainc.com](http://www.stinainc.com) for more information.

A dark blue banner with white text and icons. On the left, the year '2022' is written vertically in a large, bold font. To its right, the text 'U.S. POST-CONSUMER PLASTIC RECYCLING DATA' is written in a smaller, bold font. Below this, the word 'DASHBOARD' is written in a very large, bold font. To the right of the text are three icons: a bar chart, a pie chart, and a percentage symbol. On the far right, there is a white right-pointing arrow on a teal background.