



WasteWi\$e Partnership Benefits Global Climate Change

The atmosphere that surrounds Earth contains many types of gases, including what are known as "greenhouse gases." These gases absorb and retain heat from the sun. Without greenhouse gases, the average temperature on Earth would be 5°F instead of the current 60°F. A buildup of these gases in the atmosphere, on the other hand, could raise global temperatures, triggering profound changes in the Earth's climate and ecosystems.

The manufacture and distribution of products and the subsequent management of solid waste can contribute to the formation of greenhouse gases. For this reason, as well as for other environmental benefits, EPA is encouraging waste reduction efforts. WasteWi\$e is one EPA program helping to curb greenhouse gas emissions by expanding waste prevention and recycling in businesses nationwide.

WHAT IS WASTEWi\$E?

Since January 1994, EPA has been working in partnership with American businesses to reduce municipal solid waste. More than 420 companies are now WasteWi\$e partners. Many of these are Fortune 500 service or manufacturing companies. Partners are located across the country and represent a variety of business and industrial sectors. Through the WasteWi\$e program, companies make a voluntary commitment to implement or expand upon a solid waste reduction program with three complementary components:

WASTE Wi\$E



■ **Preventing waste.** The cornerstone of WasteWi\$e, waste prevention means using less material to do the same job or produce the same product, thereby making less waste. WasteWi\$e partners commit to implementing three significant waste prevention activities of their choice.

■ **Recycling.** By recycling, American businesses can be instrumental in diverting materials from disposal. WasteWi\$e partners commit to initiate, expand, or improve company programs to collect recyclables. For example, companies may add new materials to an existing program, or increase recycling rates by educating employees or the community.

■ **Buying or manufacturing recycled products.** Businesses can play a key role in assimilating recycled materials into consumer markets. WasteWi\$e partners commit to increase the overall recycled content in the products they purchase. Manufacturers may also increase the percentage of postconsumer materials in the products they make.

WasteWi\$e partners design their own solid waste reduction programs, tailored to meet their needs and operations. Partners monitor their progress and report annually to EPA on their accomplishments. The WasteWi\$e program helps participating companies discover waste reduction opportunities and set waste reduction goals. Partners have access (through a toll-free helpline) to WasteWi\$e representatives,

who provide personalized assistance, and to a wide range of waste reduction publications. EPA also publicly recognizes individual companies and program successes.

HOW CAN WASTEWI\$E HELP REDUCE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS?

By reducing waste, WasteWi\$e partners divert millions of tons of material from disposal. They also attain higher levels of efficiency by only using the materials they really need. Simply put, as businesses prevent more waste and recycle more materials, fewer greenhouse gases are emitted into the atmosphere.

Waste prevention, in particular, greatly reduces the emission of greenhouse gases by conserving raw materials and the energy expended to retrieve, process, and manufacture materials into products. In addition, waste prevention keeps materials out of landfills and incinerators. Overall, waste prevention provides more climate change benefits than any other waste management option.



For more information on WasteWi\$e, call the WasteWi\$e helpline at 1-800-EPA-WISE. For more information on climate change and waste reduction, contact EPA's RCRA Hotline at 800-424-9346.

By boosting their recycling efforts, WasteWi\$e partners divert valuable materials from the waste stream that otherwise would be disposed of in landfills and incinerators where they would emit greenhouse gases. In particular, many companies have increased their recycling of office paper and corrugated containers. By keeping paper products out of landfills, methane emissions from landfills are reduced. In addition, when used paper is recycled into new paper products, fewer trees have to be harvested. Trees take large amounts of carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere and store it in wood.

WasteWi\$e partners are also encouraged to manufacture or buy products made from recyclable materials. This helps ensure that recyclables, rather than raw materials, are used in manufacturing processes. Typically less energy is used during manufacture when recycled materials rather than virgin materials are used.



HOW DOES WASTEWI\$E FIT INTO THE CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN?

In October 1993, the Climate Change Action Plan was initiated to strengthen our country's commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The plan outlines more than 50 voluntary initiatives designed to reduce emissions of these gases to 1990 levels by the year 2000. EPA is responsible for encouraging attainment of about half of the reductions under this plan.

WasteWi\$e partners are already playing a lead role in helping EPA achieve these goals. In 1994 alone, WasteWi\$e partners reduced and recycled over 1 million tons of material. WasteWi\$e will be a significant contributor to EPA's overall Climate Change Action Plan goal.

