Welcome Youth Climate Action Fund to Waste Reduction!

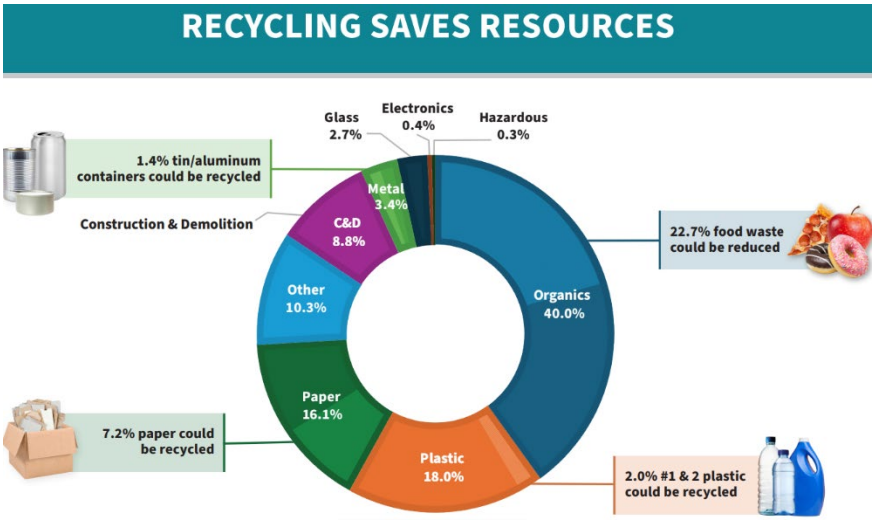
The City of Lincoln has a unique waste hauling system where we have private businesses completing the hauling of garbage and recyclables (one offers composting for food waste) lincoln.ne.gov/recycle. The City's Transportation and Utilities department runs the Solid Waste Management Division. They manage the landfill (only waste from Lancaster County allowed here), a transfer station, supports the Household Hazardous Waste Center (HazToGo), and the community recyclables collection facilities around Lincoln. Bluff Road Landfill is open 362 days a year, receives nearly 450 trucks a day and approximately 800 tons of garbage per day.



The Solid Waste Management Division just launched a large education campaign called Love Your Land Phil- lovelandphil.com.

This campaign is intended to help people **recycle more**, **recycle right**, **reduce wasting food**, and **waste less in general**. This campaign is engaging on social media, producing local billboards, active at community events through booth engagement and sustainable giveaways, and has a variety of education materials that will be online for individuals to download as a "tool-kit" for self-education.

This campaign is funded by an U.S. Environmental Protection Agency grant and was written to help motivate personal actions and change in the community. The data for this campaign came from the chart to the left. This data collected from a waste audit (people sorting trash) to tell us an estimate of what materials are arriving at the landfill and what could be diverted.



The Love You Land Phil campaign is addressing some of the highest materials that could be diverted in the landfill. Materials that are not being covered by the campaign that are becoming a rising issue in most landfills across the United States. These include:

1. Electronics;
2. Proper battery disposal and management;
3. Non-recyclable plastics (plastic film, single use plastics and more);
4. Textiles/Fast Fashion.

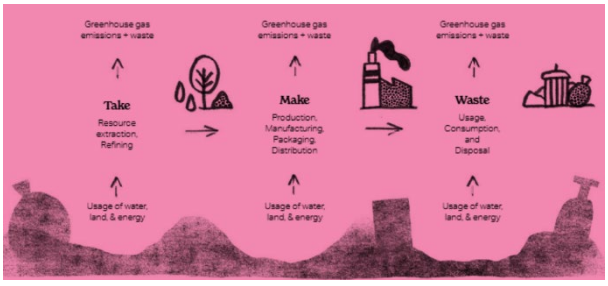
Landfills are important because people need a place to put waste we produce but we need to make sure we aren't filling up landfills too fast by throwing away everything. Landfills have rules they have to follow to protect air, water, ground water. These rules are governed by RCRA (epa.gov/rcra) and that we have an organized collection system.



Many countries outside of the United States don't have an organized collection system or rules and regulations in place to manage the waste they produce. At times, this leads to wealthy countries exploiting and sending waste poorer countries that don't have management plans for that waste (look up textile waste in Ghana or Chile or e-waste in Southeast Asia).



Many times, businesses produce and we consume items so quickly because they are trending or we "need them" without thinking what happens to that item after use. Some of this waste is managed appropriately but it does become challenging when the mass production of materials continues to persist. Resources become minimized and the raw materials needed to produce these materials need to be mined to create more. Is more really needed? How can we change the trend of consumerism? How can we get the public to realize the environmental costs of the trending materials that get purchased. Do people realize that plastics are made from oil? Polyester in clothing is made from oil. Do we want to buy and wear new shirts made from oil?



Currently, most products aren't currently designed and manufactured to be recycled. They are designed to be purchased, used, and thrown away- a linear model. The EPA is promoting businesses move towards circular economy model. This would make products easier to repair, reuse, or recycle. We aren't there yet and it's not happening fast enough.

Let’s think about how we are going to change the world of waste!