Upstream

Extended Producer Responsibility Can Save Money & Create Jobs

Reuse Supports a "Just Transition"

Reuse helps reduce pollution, chemical exposure, and litter and can greatly improve the living conditions of a community, while reducing waste management costs for local businesses and government.

Reuse services create good local jobs. The logistics of reusables collection, washing, and redistribution provides safe local jobs, as opposed to disposable-related jobs in locales where extraction, production, and disposal takes place.

Reuse can be a climate mitigation strategy. Over their life-cycle, reusables have lower greenhouse gas emissions compared to disposables. For example, the CO_2 impacts of disposable paper, plastic, and bioplastic cups are 3-10 times greater than reusable ceramic, stainless steel, and glass.[1] This directly benefits the Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities most impacted by climate change.

Reuse can help "turn off the tap" for single-use plastics, as it reduces the demand for single-use products. It can reduce the need to expand production operations that disproportionately affect Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities who are often living on the fenceline of industry.

Reuse and recycling create between 9 and 30 times more jobs than landfills and incinerators. Sector by sector analysis demonstrates the potential cost savings and jobs impacts of reusable packaging, systems, and services.[2]

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Packaging Policies Can Drive Reuse

Historically, EPR laws have focused on recycling by specifying target rates producers must meet for recycling for plastic, paper, glass, aluminum). But EPR can also drive the reduction of single-use packaging use so there's no waste to recycle by:

- Creating targets for overall packaging reduction;
- Specifying how much packaging must be reusable or refillable by sector;
- Providing funding for reuse/refill infrastructure.

Learn more at upstreamsolutions.org

Transport Packaging: Reusable Crates Save Business Money and Reduce Waste, and Climate Impacts.

The reusable Maxinest shipping crate has a carbon footprint of 26 kg CO_2e per unit, much less than the 71 kg CO_2e per unit of standard cardboard boxes.Their sturdiness and potential data tracking with Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) means reusable crates offer **less product damage, easier product handling, and optimisation of inventory management.**

Optimization of transport loads saves money. In the US and Europe (EU), 25% of all road-based freight trips are empty, and of the non-empty trips only 60% of space is utilized, resulting in a load factor of under 50%. The high cost of space in urban centers is forcing distribution centers further out, creating traffic and inefficiencies. **A 10–30% load efficiency gain would be worth $100–300 billion a year.**[3]

- US tortilla manufacturer, Mission Foods, **saved $18 million over five years** using RFID-enabled reusable crates across their supply chain.[4]
- In Sweden, Svenska Retursystem operates a pool of transportation reusable packaging that services the whole grocery retail sector **lowering costs by $18.7 million and waste by 50,000 tons.**[5]

Reusable Transport Systems Create Jobs. For example, Brambles, a reusable transport packaging service in over 60 countries, has 14,000+ employees. They have 850 service centers and use 470 million reusable pallets and containers.[6]

Foodservice: Reusable take-out services and reuse onsite saves money.

Cost Benefits. U.S. foodservice spends $24 billion per year on nearly 1 trillion pieces of disposable foodware – 86% can be switched to reusable (in take-out, delivery, and onsite dining), saving food businesses $5 billion per year. Business and local government would save an additional $5.1 billion in waste management costs – that's a **$10 billion per year in cost savings**.[7]

Average savings for a small business:

$3000 - $22,000 cost savings

1,300-2,200 lbs. of waste eliminated

110,000 to 225,000 packaging items eliminated

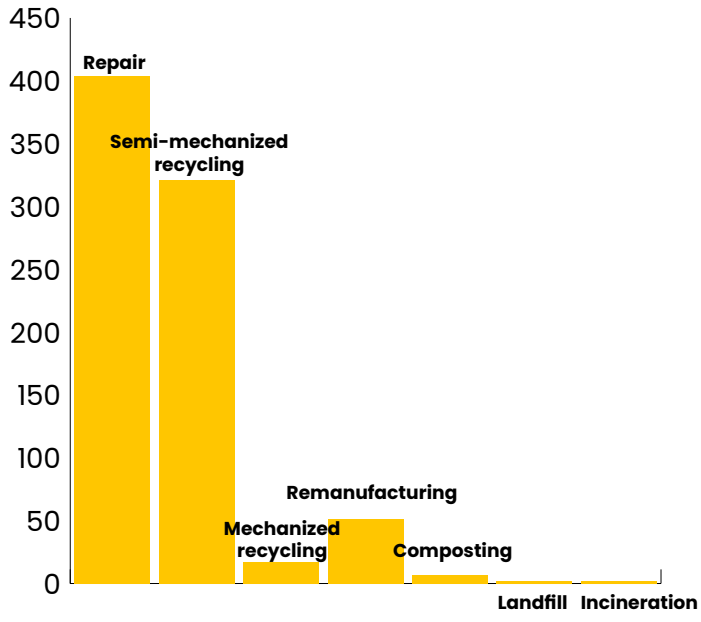
Data provided by ReThinkDisposable.org

Returnable Cups. Getting take-out beverages in a returnable, reusable cups is an option with innovators like Vessel (Boulder, Berkeley), Usefull (Boston, California), Okapi (Portland, OR). At events: CupZero, Globelet, TURN, r.Cup.

Returnable Containers. Take-out and delivery is available in returnable reusables in cities across the North America with Dispatch Goods (SF Bay Area), Encora Co (Chicago), Green GrubBox (Seattle), Forever Ware (Minneapolis), Full Cycle Take-out (Honolulu), GreenToGo (Durham), GoBox (Portland, OR), Keep Truckee Green (Truckee), M'Porte (San Diego), Recirclable (Boston), Re:Dish (NY Metro area), r.Ware (Minneapolis), Sparkl (SF Bay area) – among others.

Repair creates more jobs than managing waste.

Repair is a form of reuse. Comparing the number of jobs in the repair sector to other forms of handling waste (reported as number of jobs per 10,000 tons of waste per year).[8]



Endnotes

1 Reuse Wins Report, by Upstream. 2021. Accessed on March 4, 2022.
2 EcoCycle, Zero Waste Creates Jobs.
3 Ellen Macarthur Foundation (2016), The New Plastics Economy: Rethinking the Future of Plastics, p. 62.
4 id.
5 id.
6 id. at 64
7 Upstream (June 2021), Reuse Wins.
8 Ribero-Broomhead, J., Tangri, N. (2021), The Job Creation of Zero Waste Solutions, Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives.