



**PLASTIC RECYCLING
CORPORATION OF
CALIFORNIA (PRCC)**

PO Box 1327
Sonoma, CA 95476

T 707-935-1997
F 707-935-1998
Patty@PRCC.biz

PRCC.biz

All Plastics are Not Created Equal: PRCC's PET Recycling Success Story

The Plastic Recycling Corporation of California (PRCC) was created in 1987 as a non-profit, voluntary producer responsibility organization in response to the (then) new California beverage container recycling program. For the past 34 years, the mission of the PRCC has been to ensure that every PET (#1) beverage bottle collected in California for recycling avoids going to a landfill and ends up in a productive secondary use.

In addition to the accomplishments listed below, PRCC has assisted recyclers, reclaimers, and waste haulers who operate MRF's, to cost-effectively recycle PET bottles. The PRCC works to ensure that all collected PET bottles find a secondary home, and helps nurture California-based reclaimers that actually convert that material into pellet or flake, thus reducing the use of virgin PET. In fact, the PRCC has been described in public forums by prominent environmentalists as "a plastics success story" in California.

As distinguished from other plastic types, PET (technically referred to as polyethylene terephthalate and denoted by the number "1" enclosed in chasing arrows embossed on containers) is a unique plastic polymer, and because of its many attributes to deliver product safely and cost-effectively it is used predominantly in food and beverage containers. It is easily recyclable and has a low carbon footprint, especially when recycled.

The PRCC continuously nurtures the recycling infrastructure for PET bottles in California through supply contracts and other financial support. As a result, a mature marketplace exists for postconsumer PET; there are currently seven operating reclamation facilities located in California that purchase postconsumer PET and convert this material into clean raw material.

California now has enough PET recycling capacity to convert every PET bottle collected in California into new packaging (bottles and clamshells). While PET has the unique ability to be recycled into a variety of productive secondary uses (including carpet, strapping and polyester textiles), nearly all of California's PET is used to make new bottles, clamshells, and thermoform packaging.

The PRCC is proud of the following accomplishments and activities:

- Even with the negative impacts of COVID, over 68% of California PET beverage bottles were recycled by consumers in 2020—and the 2016-2020 average recycling rate is over 73%;
- 45% (approximately 200m pounds) of scrap PET material collected in California is handled by the PRCC, almost none is exported offshore;
- The PRCC has entered into supply agreements with four California-based reclaimers to ensure a consistent demand for California’s recycled PET bottles;
- PRCC supported AB793—passed in 2020—the law requires a postconsumer plastic recycled content standard of 15% beginning January 1, 2022, increasing to 25 % on 2025 and 50% on 2030;
- PET bottle manufacturers and users of PET beverage and food containers already voluntarily incorporate as high as 36% in their entire product lines—including some bottles with as high as 100% recycled material—all of which equates to hundreds of millions of pounds of post-consumer PET being used to make new containers;
- PRCC Board and staff are working hard to increase the amount of recycled PET collected in California to ensure a sufficient and steady supply of quality recycled PET feedstock.

Overall, these accomplishments and activities have resulted in a mature PET commodity market so that postconsumer PET bottles are successfully recycled in California and thereby avoid landfills.

The PRCC is committed to assisting the entire waste recovery industry to continue to separate and sell the PET containers that they collect, and invite other segments of the plastics industry to replicate our "success story."

Patty Moore is the Executive Director of the Plastic Recycling Corporation of California (PRCC) who has developed a positive reputation in the recycling industry for over 40 years. We invite you to learn more about the unique characteristics of polyethylene terephthalate (PET) by visiting the PRCC website at