



# Getting the Lead Out

The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is working hard to get the lead out — of packaging. Connecticut is one of nineteen states that have passed laws prohibiting the use of four toxic metals in packaging or its components, such as inks, adhesives or labels. Historically these metals were used in colorants and inks, and as stabilizers to slow down the breakdown of certain plastics when exposed to heat and ultraviolet light.



Using the XRF analyzer to test a sample

Connecticut's toxics in packaging law prohibits the distribution or sale of packaging containing any amount of intentionally added cadmium, lead, mercury, and hexavalent chromium. The law also sets a limit on the incidental presence of these metals. Product packaging is often quickly discarded and becomes a large portion (33%) of our municipal solid waste. The law helps prevent these toxic metals from entering landfills, waste incinerators, recyclable materials, and ultimately, the environment.

DEP is a founding member of the Toxics in Packaging Clearinghouse (TPCH), which was formed in 1992 to promote the Model Toxics in Packaging Legislation. Last year TPCH and its member states screened 355

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packaging samples for the presence of the four restricted metals using a portable X-Ray Fluorescence (XRF) analyzer. The samples were selected to represent different packaging materials (e.g., aluminum, glass, paper, plastic, and steel) and products, mostly found in retail stores.

Of the packages tested, approximately 16% exceeded the screening threshold of 100 parts per million (ppm) for the presence of one or more of the restricted metals. Cadmium and lead were most frequently detected. For example, test results for one package — a plastic mailing bag — indicated that it was almost 1% (10,000 ppm) lead by weight. The vast majority of non-compliant packaging was imported.

As a result of the study, TPCH notified the companies whose products failed the screening test. They were required to either certify that their packaging is now in compliance (backed up by new test data) or discontinue the sale and distribution of the packaging. Those few companies that did not comply were referred to one or more member states for possible enforcement action.

TPCH has begun a multi-state campaign to educate the packaging industry about requirements of the laws through speaking engagements at trade organization meetings, articles in industry publications and fact sheets. The outreach efforts are designed to reach the entire supply chain from retail to manufacturing. DEP will continue its work with TPCH on this educational campaign and will assist with additional packaging screening in 2008.

For more information, including the report on the 2007 study, visit [www.toxicsinpackaging.org](http://www.toxicsinpackaging.org) or contact David Westcott, DEP Waste Engineering and Enforcement at (860) 424-3666.



## Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Connecticut

The Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Connecticut is a partnership of organizations and individuals working together to reduce toxic chemicals to reduce and eliminate toxic chemical exposures in our everyday lives – in buildings, schools and workplaces, air, water and food, and in consumer products. Their goal is to replace hazardous substances with proven, safer alternatives.

Currently, the coalition is working on a campaign to raise awareness about toxic chemicals in toys and promoting policies at the municipal and state levels to protect public health and environment. For more information, visit [www.safehealthyct.org](http://www.safehealthyct.org) or Sarah Uhl, Coalition Coordinator at (860) 232-6232.

# Connecticut Continues to Make Progress on Climate Change

With the arrival of spring and then Earth Day, magazines, newspapers and television tend to focus on the environment and being “green” and have been reporting more on the effects of climate change. Scientists are finding that birds are laying eggs earlier than usual, plants are beginning to flower earlier and allergy sufferers are starting to sneeze a few days sooner all due to these changes in our climate.

Connecticut has a Climate Change Action Plan that makes recommendations on ways to reduce the state’s greenhouse gas emissions. It’s been three years since the Plan was adopted and each year a report is submitted to the legislature about the progress that has been made. This year’s report points out that more residents, towns, and state government are buying clean energy, there were 13 commercial and 155 residential photovoltaic (PV) systems installed, biofuels are increasingly being used, and the investments in energy efficiency programs are reaping results. However, reducing fossil fuel use for energy and transportation remains a tough challenge. The report is available at [www.ctclimatechange.com](http://www.ctclimatechange.com).



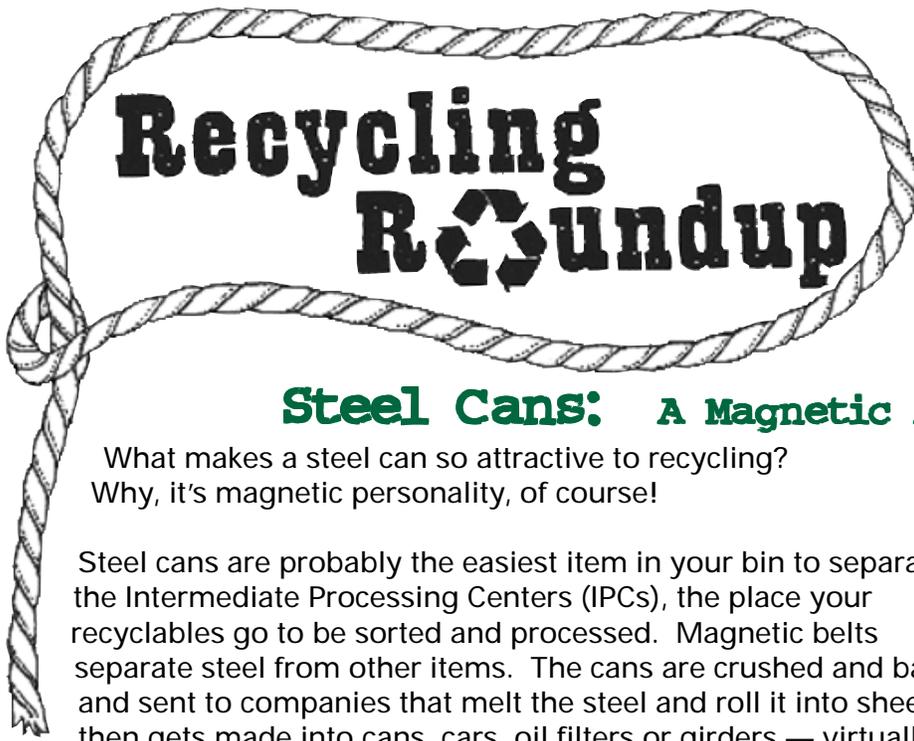
Participants brainstormed new solutions to climate change

In an effort to breathe new life into the state’s climate change actions and get new ideas from broad range of Connecticut citizens, a series of forums, or public stakeholder meetings, have been held across the state. So far, five of the seven meetings have been held, each focusing on a different topic including electricity generation and efficiency, transportation and land use, non-electric energy use, and agriculture issues. Approximately 65 – 100 people have attended each meeting, where they have brainstormed new solutions to climate change.



The stakeholder meeting held in Fairfield focused on transportation and responsible growth

The next meeting will be held in June at Yale University and focus on education and consumer awareness. Everyone is invited to participate. To find out more, visit [www.ctclimatechange.com/stakeholder.html](http://www.ctclimatechange.com/stakeholder.html)



## Everything You Wanted to Know about Cans

### Steel Cans: A Magnetic Attraction For Recycling

What makes a steel can so attractive to recycling?  
Why, it's magnetic personality, of course!

Steel cans are probably the easiest item in your bin to separate at the Intermediate Processing Centers (IPCs), the place your recyclables go to be sorted and processed. Magnetic belts separate steel from other items. The cans are crushed and bailed and sent to companies that melt the steel and roll it into sheets. It then gets made into cans, cars, oil filters or girders — virtually anything made out of steel.



According to the Can Institute, two out of three pounds of new steel are produced from old steel. In fact, in the U.S., steel cans and other steel products contain at least 25 percent recycled steel, with some containing nearly 100 percent recycled steel. Every ton of steel recycled saves the natural resources that would otherwise be used to make one ton of new steel: 2,500 pounds of iron ore, 1,400 pounds of coal and 120 pounds of limestone.

### Aluminum Cans: Not “Attractive”, But Very Desirable!

Aluminum is not magnetic, so it is not as easily separated at the IPC as steel cans are, but they are the most valuable item in your recycling bin. It takes 95% less energy to recycle aluminum than to start at the beginning mining the bauxite and it can be recycled indefinitely.

Aluminum cans are baled at the IPC and then taken to an aluminum reclamation plant. They are shredded into small pieces and melted in a furnace. The molten aluminum is gradually hardened into rectangular slabs, called ingots, and then formed into thin sheets of aluminum.

According to the Can Manufacturers Institute, recycling one aluminum beverage can save enough electricity to power a TV for three hours, or a 100-watt light bulb for four hours. Recycling forty aluminum beverage cans has the energy-saving equivalent of one gallon of gasoline.



Aluminum and steel can be recycled indefinitely without affecting quality or strength. Recycling both of these materials saves natural resources and energy and makes closing the recycling loop easy.

#### Sources

[www.eia.doe.gov/kids/energyfacts/saving/recycling/solidwaste/metals.html](http://www.eia.doe.gov/kids/energyfacts/saving/recycling/solidwaste/metals.html)

[www.cancentral.com/recFAQ.cfm](http://www.cancentral.com/recFAQ.cfm)

[www.worldwise.com/recyclingsteel.html](http://www.worldwise.com/recyclingsteel.html)

<http://recyclemetal.com/Steel%20Tin%20Can%20Recycling1.htm>

## Everything You Wanted to Know about Cans (continued from page 4)

What kinds of metal can be recycled?

Steel or aluminum food and beverage containers are required to be recycled. They should be rinsed before putting them in your recycling bin but labels do not have to be removed. Many aluminum beverage cans – like beer and soda – have a deposit and can be redeemed in CT. But more non-carbonated beverages like energy drinks are showing up in aluminum cans that are not redeemable, so be sure to recycle them. Clean aluminum foil is usually accepted and some towns will also allow empty metal aerosol cans.

Scrap metal is also a mandated recyclable. Call your town about how to recycle small items such as empty paint cans and large items such as refrigerators or stoves. For a list of town recycling contacts, visit [www.ct.gov/dep/recycle](http://www.ct.gov/dep/recycle)

## What's in Our Trash?



Trash at a CT Waste-to-Energy Plant

In 2006, DEP published the State's Solid Waste Management Plan that is now being used for solid waste management planning and decision making in Connecticut through to the year 2024. Currently, the municipal solid waste (MSW) that is generated in Connecticut is estimated at 3.8 million tons per year, with 30% being recycled. The Plan sets a target of 58% of MSW to be diverted through increased source reduction, reuse, recycling and composting.

DEP needs more data and information to determine how best to achieve the 58% target rate and plans to have a waste disposal characterization study conducted. The study will analyze Connecticut's trash from households, institutions, businesses, and industries. It will help identify the type, amount and origin of material that presents the best potential for achieving increased waste reduction and recycling.

DEP is preparing a Request for Proposal (RFP) for this statewide study. The RFP is expected to be posted on the CT DAS website in April/May and it is expected that a contract will be in place later this summer. For more information, contact Tessa Gutowski at (860) 424-3096.

# WHAT'S NEW IN P2?

from the Connecticut DEP

## On the CT Clean Energy Trail

There's a worldwide energy revolution under way. And Connecticut is leading it. See it for yourself—on the Connecticut Clean Energy Trail.

Connecticut has been a world leader in technology innovation for more than 200 years, giving the world everything from the first cotton gin and revolver to the first helicopter and artificial heart. The American wind turbine was invented in Connecticut more than 100 years ago. The fuel cells that sent astronauts to the moon were created here. So it's no surprise that it's spearheading development of clean energy technologies.

The Connecticut Clean Energy Trail is an innovative web page ([www.cleanenergytrail.com](http://www.cleanenergytrail.com)) which takes you to 20 sites that use some form of clean energy. Clean energy doesn't come from fossil fuels. Instead, it comes from sources like the sun, wind, water, biomass and fuel cells. Links to photos from the "trail map" show you the clean energy installations at each of these sites, which include stores, schools, museums and municipal buildings throughout the state. There are directions if you wish to visit them.

Today, Connecticut is home to the world's leading fuel cell companies and scores of other clean energy-related businesses. These innovative businesses are generating good jobs and strengthening the state's economy while creating technologies that will make clean energy a way of life for millions. For more information on Connecticut's Clean Energy Fund programs and initiatives, visit [www.ctcleanenergy.com](http://www.ctcleanenergy.com).

### Bike Everywhere

Since the summer of 2000, DEP along with the Capitol Region Council of Governments, the Departments of Public Health and Transportation, the Travelers Insurance Company and others have promoted cycling as a viable commuting option through the "Capitol Region Bike to Work" program. Hundreds of commuters in this region are now biking to work. Events, like free breakfasts at the Old State House, are being held regularly throughout the region. In 2006, with business sponsorship, the program held events even during the winter months. Amazingly, people are biking — no matter what the weather!

This year, the "Bike to Work" concept has been expanded to a "Bike Everywhere" approach in the Central Connecticut region. The program encourages people to use their bicycles to travel many places where their cars now take them, like shopping, restaurants, visiting friends, and going to the movies or to their place of worship. Each "Bike Everywhere" event you participate in will give you a chance to win prizes. For more information on the program and on upcoming events, visit [http://wecyclect.org/bike\\_everywhere.htm](http://wecyclect.org/bike_everywhere.htm)



Note: This feature offers answers to select environmental questions. Send your question to the editor's address -- [judith.prill@ct.gov](mailto:judith.prill@ct.gov) and watch future issues for an answer.

Dear Eartha:

You missed a major opportunity to promote reuse and waste reduction in the discussion of what happens to #1 plastics. (*Recycling Roundup, P2 View Winter 2008*) Purchasing larger concentrated sizes could have been mentioned — but the big one is not buying all those individual water bottles!

Peg H.,  
Branford, CT

Thanks Peg for pointing that out. We should always encourage reduction as the best option, followed by reuse and then recycling. The bottled water habit in the U.S. has increased tremendously in the last 10 years since people started making a healthier choice by substituting water for soda or other sugary drinks. However, it is estimated that Americans will drink more than 30 billion single-serving bottles of water this year and two million tons of these bottles will end up as trash or litter. (*source: Care2 Green Living*)

What can you do? Although you can recycle these plastic bottles in many Connecticut towns, an environmentally preferable option is to fill a reusable water bottle with tap water. Tap water provided by public water systems has to

meet strict standards set by the federal EPA. Bottled water costs much more than tap water on a per gallon basis and may not be any safer. If the taste is an issue, tap water can usually be improved by letting it stand exposed to air or by simply running it through a filter.

What should I carry my water in? Recent studies have raised concerns that toxic chemicals may leach out from flexible plastics (phthalates) or even when using the harder #7 polycarbonate plastics (bisphenol-A). A better option than plastic is to get a reusable bottle made from aluminum or stainless steel. These new versions of the old canteen are made from inert materials that do not leach toxic chemicals. They are a bit pricey but can be reused for years and years. Or do what I did the other day when I found myself without my water bottle...I took a long drink from a nice cold water fountain!

- Eartha



Where can I find more information?  
Aluminum and Stainless Steel Reusable Bottles: Can sometimes be found in natural food or camping/hiking stores or can purchased online — search for “reusable aluminum water bottle” or “reusable stainless steel water bottle” to find companies that sell them.  
Answers to Drinking Water Questions: [www.ct.gov/dph](http://www.ct.gov/dph), type “tap water” in the search block.



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# P 2 C A L E N D A R

## A S E L E C T I O N O F E N V I R O N M E N T A L E V E N T S

May 17, 2008

### Solar Tour and Seminar for Medical Professionals Dental Associates of Farmington, Farmington, CT

A solar tour and seminar for doctors, dentists and other medical professionals who own their own buildings. The installer of the building's new 28.56 kilowatt solar electric installation, dentist/owner, and experts from the Connecticut Clean Energy Fund and the Connecticut Green Building Council will explain the system and answer questions. Sponsored by People's Action for Clean Energy and co-sponsored by the Connecticut Clean Energy Fund. Tour information: (860) 693-4813, or [www.pace-cleanenergy.org](http://www.pace-cleanenergy.org).

May 18, 2008

### Farm Festival & Seedling Sale

Common Ground Environmental Education Center,  
New Haven, CT

Celebrate community and the beginning of the growing season with tractor-pulled hayrides, music, face-painting, ice cream making, games, and visits to the animals. Organic seedlings for your home garden will be available for purchase. For more information, visit [www.nhep.com](http://www.nhep.com) or call (203) 389-0823.

June 13, 2008

### Hospitals Step Up To The Plate: Serving Healthy, Local Food

Yale-New Haven Hospital, New Haven, CT  
Workshop for health care facility dieticians, dining services, food purchasing, or anyone interested in bringing locally grown foods into their hospitals for healthier patients, staff and visitors. Sponsored by the CT Hospital Environmental Roundtable. For more information, contact Connie Mendolia at (860) 424-3243 or Nan Peckham at (860) 424-3357, DEP Office of Pollution Prevention.

June 14, 2008

### Kids and Carson

Sessions Woods Wildlife Management Area, Burlington, CT  
To commemorate Conservationist Rachel Carson, a program sponsored by DEP will be held for children to explore the wonders of wildlife and the natural world. Pre-registration is required. Call (860) 675-8130 to register or for more information.

Got Unwanted Paints or Chemicals ?  
[www.ct.gov/dep/recycle](http://www.ct.gov/dep/recycle) has the schedule of Household Hazardous Waste Collections