



New Research Highlights Need for Consumer Education

Now is not the time to let up on reminding consumers recycling is important

DENTON, Texas, June 5, 2024 – Consumers need more recycling education, according to new research commissioned by the Carton Council of North America. The organization’s biennial national survey reveals a decline in confidence that mainstream materials can be recycled, and that recycling is still important.

The survey reveals small percentage drops across all commodities in consumers reporting they are confident that materials are accepted in their recycling programs. This same trend is evident when they report if they always recycle those items. High numbers of respondents (92%) say they still support recycling but those who marked recycling as “important and a priority” decreased by 6 percentage points, while the perception of it being “somewhat important” increased by 3 percentage points. This suggests recycling remains a priority, albeit a less pressing one.

“Even a slight decrease in recycling focus can have a significant impact,” said Larine Urbina, vice president of communications at the Carton Council. “These findings are a reminder that ongoing education is essential.”

The greatest barrier to recycling is uncertainty about what materials can be recycled. For food and beverage cartons specifically, over a third of respondents who report they don’t regularly recycle their cartons cite uncertainty as their primary reason. To tackle this, consumers can use the address locator at [RecycleCartons.com](https://www.RecycleCartons.com) to find local carton recycling options.

Product packaging and community websites remain the top two sources consumers look to when determining a package’s recyclability, emphasizing the need for accurate and accessible on-pack recycling instructions and up-to-date local websites from those running recycling programs.

The study, conducted by Hill & Knowlton, surveyed nearly 9,000 participants who have access to curbside recycling programs. For more information about the survey and carton recycling, please visit [RecycleCartons.com/research](https://www.RecycleCartons.com/research).

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About the Carton Council

The Carton Council is composed of four leading carton manufacturers, [Elopak](#), [Pactiv Evergreen](#), [SIG](#), and [Tetra Pak](#). Formed in 2009, the Carton Council works to deliver long-term collaborative solutions to divert valuable cartons from the landfill. Through a united effort, the Carton Council is committed to building a sustainable infrastructure for carton recycling in the U.S. and works toward its goals of adding access to carton recycling, as well as increased recycling rates, nationwide. For more information, visit [RecycleCartons.com](#).

About Food and Beverage Cartons

Food and beverage cartons contain high-quality fiber which, when recycled, is used to make new products, contributing to a circular economy. There are two types of cartons: aseptic and gable top. Aseptic cartons are shelf-stable and are often used to store products like broth, soups, juices or milk for long periods without the need for preservatives or refrigeration. Gable top cartons require refrigeration and are often considered the traditional milk carton.