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Aluminum Recycling

In 2002, there were over 100 billion aluminum cans manufactured in the US, at speeds of over 2500 cans per minute for just one can line! 53.8 billion of them were recycled, for a beverage can recycling rate of 53.4%. The aluminum industry paid over \$800 million for these used aluminum beverage cans.

Beverage cans made from aluminum were first introduced in 1965. Since then, engineers have continuously worked to improve the can and to reduce the amount of aluminum in the can, thereby reducing its cost and making it more efficient. The can lid size has been reduced numerous times and the "body" of the can has undergone significant reduction of aluminum over the years. In 1972, it took 22 cans to make one pound of aluminum, while today it takes 33 cans to equal one pound of aluminum.

The aluminum beverage can is 100 percent recyclable back into a new beverage can indefinitely. By recycling aluminum cans, you are keeping them from the landfill and saving energy! Making new cans from recycled aluminum saves 95% of the energy needed to make aluminum from virgin metal. It also conserves natural resources and reduces emissions. The 53.8 billion cans that were recycled in 2002, saved the energy equivalent to 15 million barrels of crude oil – America's entire gasoline consumption for one day! The recycling process for aluminum cans happens very quickly! Used aluminum cans are recycled and returned to store shelves in as little as 60 days.

On a per ton basis, the aluminum can collects the most amount of money of all the containers in a commingled recycling bin, making it the most valuable packaging material.

Recycling aluminum cans takes very little effort. Just rinse the can with water (mainly to keep bugs away) and drop them in your bin or take them to a drop off center. All curbside programs and drop off centers that collect containers accept aluminum cans. Please don't flatten or crush the cans, as crushed cans are more likely to end up with other recycled materials. Don't forget to recycle those cans you don't consume at home as well! The aluminum can recycling rate has declined in recent years and one of the reasons is due to increased consumption of beverages away from home.

It might be easier to throw an aluminum can in the trash, but it makes much more sense to recycle it!