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# Sustainability Package Coalition Announces Issuance of "2015-16 Centralized Study on Availability of Recycling"

## Arkansas Environmental, Energy, and Water Law Blog

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The Sustainable Packaging Coalition ("SPC") announced the issuance of a report titled:

*2015-16 Centralized Study on Availability of Recycling ("Report")*

The Report was prepared by RRS and Moore Recycling Associates, Inc.

The Report's stated purpose is to measure and analyze the availability of residential recycling programs. This is deemed an important issue for recycling industry stakeholders because availability is noted to be a fundamental prerequisite for material recovery to take place. The information is also deemed "key to inform the packaging supply chain about the current availability of recycling for their products so they can be strategic in expanding recycling as an end of life solution."

The Report acknowledges that quantifying recycling availability is difficult due to "the patchwork of different ways Americans receive recycling services." Two examples of such programs include:

- Curbside
- Drop-off

Further, it is noted that the threshold for marking packaging as recyclable can be interpreted in different ways despite the Federal Trade Commission's guides on the subject.

SPC states that its Report used a standardized methodology to evaluate both general characteristics of United States recycling programs and specific availability-of-recycling metrics for a wide range of materials. The Report is stated to provide a "national snapshot of the ways in which consumers are able to participate in recycling at this point in time, and allows recycling stakeholders to identify and analyze gaps in service provision."

The Report denotes as key findings:

- 94% of the U.S. population has some type of recycling program available to them, including both curbside and drop-off recycling.
- Curbside recycling programs are available to 73% of the U.S. population, with 53% of the population having curbside recycling "automatically" provided at their home, while the other 20% has a type of subscription or opt-in recycling program available.
- Drop-off recycling programs are available to 64% of the U.S. population. For 21% of the population, drop-off recycling programs are the only programs available.

- 6% of the U.S. population has no recycling programs available.
- Recycling programs were more widely available to residents in higher-population communities, compared to less populated areas.
- Almost 90% of residents with single-family curbside recycling programs now have single stream collection.
- Large rolling carts for recycling collection are now used by at least 44% of residents in single family-based curbside recycling programs, and are used by more programs than use traditional recycling bins.

[A copy of the Report can be downloaded here.](#)