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## **Atlantic County Utilities Authority Announces Changes to Recycling Program** *Residents Urged to Review New Accepted Items List*

Egg Harbor Township, NJ -- The Atlantic County Utilities Authority (ACUA), in partnership with its Materials Recycling Facility operator Republic Services, are making changes to the Atlantic County recycling program.

The most notable change regards plastics. Now, **only #1 and #2 plastic bottles, jugs and containers that have necks smaller than their bases will be accepted.** Examples include soda bottles, detergent jugs, ketchup bottles, and salad dressing containers. These items should be clean and dry. Lids and caps should be removed.

Other changes include no shredded paper, no aerosol cans, no paint cans, no pizza boxes and no wrapping or tissue paper.

These changes reflect the "wish-list" of manufacturers who purchase recycled material. Much of this manufacturing takes place in China where there has been a widespread crackdown on contamination of recycling bales entering the country.

The growth of single-use plastics has also increased the number of plastic items entering the recycling stream, and all plastics are not created equally. These items have different chemical makeups, even those with the same recycling number.

We understand that many items, such as yogurt containers, may now enter the landfill. To avoid this, we encourage residents to rethink their use of single-use plastics, buy in bulk and reuse as much as possible. We are hopeful that manufacturers are working on a solution to the growing plastic issue and look forward to seeing the recycling process improve in the future.

While large-scale changes and innovations must be made to improve the recycling industry -- such as upgraded sorting equipment and growth in domestic manufacturing -- residents can still help by reducing contamination at home, work or school and only recycling the items on our accepted list.

Atlantic County residents should keep these top 10 items out of their bins:

1. Any plastic other than #1 or #2 bottles, jugs and containers that have smaller necks than bases
2. Plastic bags (these should be recycled at local grocery stores instead)
3. Take-out containers
4. Single-use plates, cups, and utensils
5. Plastic bottle caps and lids
6. Foam or paper coffee cups
7. Frozen-food boxes

8. Batteries
9. Hazardous materials like needles, light bulbs, or chemicals
10. Liquids or food waste

If residents are unsure how to dispose of an item, we encourage them to visit our website [www.acua.com](http://www.acua.com) or call 609.272.6950 for information. **When in doubt, FIND OUT or THROW IT OUT.**

We also remind Atlantic County residents that when it comes to fighting pollution and saving resources, **REDUCING and REUSING** are always the best options.



## Overview of Changes to the Recycling Program

### **NO Plastics #3-7**

ACUA will now only accept plastics #1-2 where necks are smaller than the base. This includes clean, empty and dry plastic bottles, laundry detergent bottles, ketchup bottles, and milk jugs.

#### **Why?**

These changes reflect the “wish-list” of manufacturers who purchase recycled material. Much of this manufacturing takes place in China where there has been a widespread crackdown on contamination of recycling bales entering the country.

The growth of single-use plastics has also increased the number of plastic items entering the recycling stream, and all plastics are not created equally. These items have different chemical makeups, even those with the same recycling number.

The #1 and #2 plastic jugs, bottles and containers with smaller necks is the best description for what manufacturers are seeking, which is plastic items made with Natural HDPE or Colored/Pigmented HDPE.

### **NO Wrapping Paper or Tissue Paper**

Many types of wrapping paper now include metallic or glitter items that contaminate the stream. Because there is a greater likelihood that residents will have embellished wrapping paper, we ask that residents please keep it out of their stream.

### **NO Shredded Paper**

The paper is too small to be processed by recycling sorting facilities. Mills depend on long paper fibers that will catch and stick to their screens.

### **NO Pizza Boxes**

Water, grease and other residue degrades the value of paper. Most pizza boxes are covered in grease and contaminate the cardboard.

### **NO Paint Cans**

Most paint cans have paint still in them which contaminates other recyclable material.

### **NO Aerosol Cans**

Aerosol cans are marked a danger to recycling sorting facilities.



### **NO PET Clam Shell Containers**

Clam Shell containers are different from plastic bottles because they use different formulations of plastic that melt at different temperatures. There are different kinds of plastic formed into clamshell-like packaging that even trained recycling techs have a tough time telling them apart. They are also likely to be contaminated with food waste.

### **Plastic Drip Tape**

Both foreign and domestic markets for this material have ended.

### **NO Glossy/Photo Paper**

Due to chemical coatings used in the photo developing process, most older photographs cannot be processed for recycling. Photography processing is a chemically-intensive operation that involves a whole host of ingredients, from acetic acid to gelatin. As you may imagine, some of these photographic chemicals remain in the paper of the resulting photographs — posing challenges to recyclers.

### **NO Single-Use Coffee Cups**

Most single-use cups are lined with a fine film of polyethylene, which makes the cups liquid-proof but also difficult and expensive to reprocess (because the materials have to be separated).