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July 2015 EcoFacts



Zero Waste Policies: Pay-As-You-Throw

We have a trash problem. In Nebraska, we throw away over 2 Million tons of trash every year. If we compacted it and filled Memorial Stadium, the trash would reach the height of 5 State Capitols. What's more, we paid \$33.5 million to bury \$86.5 million worth of recyclables in 2013 [1]. 68% of Nebraskans agree that the amount of money residents pay for waste collection should be based on the amount of waste they produce [2]. The most cost-effective way to reduce garbage is called Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT), or unit-based pricing.

It's a simple concept: you only pay for the trash you put at the curb. Those who generate more pay more, and those who make an effort to reduce their waste get a smaller bill. PAYT systems tend to discourage waste generation among community members. Imperial is one of the few Nebraska towns with PAYT, and their citizens generate only 2 pounds of trash per day, as compared to Nebraska's average of 7 pounds per person per day.



What you can do:

Talk to your neighbors and your city representatives about treating trash like a utility, where those who use less, pay less. The system works best when recycling infrastructure is already well-developed.

Policy [3]:

To implement a PAYT program, a solid waste agency typically needs the authority to:

- Set variable waste collection rates and charge residents accordingly.
- Establish an ordinance mandating that residents use the waste collection service.
- [Enforce](#) size or weight limits on trash containers.
- Enforce bans on [illegal diversion](#), including dumping and burning of waste and adding non-

recyclable materials to recycling bins.

- Spend solid waste agency funds for activities beyond those associated with traditional solid waste management services (for example, public education).

[1] [Nebraska Recycling Study, 2015](#)

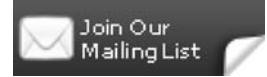
[2] [Nebraska Annual Social Indicators Survey, 2013](#)

[3] <http://www.epa.gov/epawaste/conserve/tools/payt/top9.htm>

Visit www.wastecapne.org for all your recycling needs.



WasteCap Nebraska
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