DEFENDING RECYCLING
Quick training guide for those defending recycling to elected officials, other governing bodies and the media.

WHAT THE ELECTED OFFICIAL MAY SAY:
“We don’t have to provide recycling for our citizens.”

WHAT THE PUBLIC MAY HEAR
“Recycling isn’t mandatory.”

THE FACTS/A BETTER MESSAGE:
Beginning with Senate Bill 111 in 1989 and in subsequent legislation, the North Carolina General Assembly established disposal bans on a wide range of materials, including plastic bottles and aluminum cans, which make up a large segment of the household recycling mix. As recycling of these items is mandatory, each community should provide a non-landfill option for easy to recycle items such as plastics (bottles, tubs, jugs and jars), metal (all cans), glass (bottles and jars) and paper (paper, cartons and cardboard). The state of NC has grant programs available to every community in North Carolina to help fund recycling programs. The state of NC also provides common recycling guidelines and educational materials for each community to help educate their citizens.

WHAT THE ELECTED OFFICIAL MAY SAY:
• “We can’t charge residents more for this service.”
• “No one cares about recycling; people don’t want to do it.”

WHAT THE PUBLIC MAY HEAR
“I thought I wanted to recycle, but now I am not so sure. Maybe recycling is a waste of time, energy and money.”

THE FACTS/A BETTER MESSAGE:
Americans love to recycle and love the convenience of single stream. Your residents demand this service. However, this is more than a service that the public demands. It is our responsibility to reduce waste in the landfill, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, care for our environment, protect public health, support industry, develop domestic markets and in-state jobs, and reclaim resources that would otherwise go to waste.

WHAT THE ELECTED OFFICIAL MAY SAY:
“There’s no market for recyclables since China isn’t an option anymore.”

WHAT THE PUBLIC MAY HEAR
• “Why were we shipping to China in the first place? That doesn’t sound sustainable or environmentally responsible!”
• “Recycling in America is over.”

THE FACTS/A BETTER MESSAGE:
We do have markets for recycling in America. American markets traditionally require increased sorting for a higher quality material. That’s a good standard to support! We need to do two things: reduce contamination and develop more domestic markets. We can rebuild recycling the right way. We can enhance local markets that North Carolina has been developing for decades and send even less recycling overseas. When markets recover and commodity prices increase, we will keep more money in our state and waste fewer resources with transport.
The N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Customer Service (DEACS) is a non-regulatory division of N.C. DEQ offering technical and financial assistance to businesses, manufacturers, local governments, institutions, economic developers and citizens in environmental management. For questions, call 1-877-623-6748. www.recyclenc.org