

# The Economics of Managing Solid Waste

## SECTION 3

The purpose of the S.C. Solid Waste Policy and Management Act of 1991 (Act) is to protect public health and safety, recover resources and manage waste in the most environmentally safe, economically feasible and cost-effective manner.

The Act places the responsibility of managing solid waste on county governments. This essential service includes collection, disposal, recycling and composting, outreach and education, trucks, balers and solid waste facilities and more.

Local governments reported spending more than \$364 million to manage MSW in fiscal year (FY) 2018 (July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018) according to

full-cost disclosure information provided to the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control.

Recycling allows local governments to avoid disposal costs and the opportunity to earn revenue from the sale of recyclables.

In FY18, the state's local government recycling infrastructure was comprised 85 curbside programs and nearly 600 recycling drop-off centers. South Carolina also had eight material recovery facilities (MRFs). For a list and location of the MRFs, see Figure 3.1

### Estimated Lost Revenue

Using figures from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), it is estimated\* that South Carolina disposed of more than 630,920 tons of recyclables in FY18. In addition to paying nearly \$24 million to dispose of valuable commodities, more than \$68.4 million of potential revenue from the sale of these recyclables was lost.

\* The estimated amount of material disposed of that could have been recycled is calculated by applying EPA's most recent municipal solid waste (MSW) generation rates to South Carolina's FY18 generation.

### Recycling Market Development

The S.C. Department of Commerce's Recycling Market Development Advisory Council (RMDAC) supports the state's recycling industry by working to build markets, increase material recovery and promote the impact of recycling on South Carolina's economy.

Established by the Act, RMDAC is comprised of 14 members appointed by the Governor that represent the solid waste industry, recycling sectors, government, higher education and the public.

The Recycling Market Development Division staff coordinates the activities of the council while providing technical and economic development assistance to help recycling businesses and the industry. Key market development activities for the past FY include composting, food waste, carpet, plastic and glass.

Please visit at [www.recyclinginsc.com](http://www.recyclinginsc.com) to learn more.



**South Carolina**  
Department of Commerce

Just right for business.

### Recycling Industry and Markets

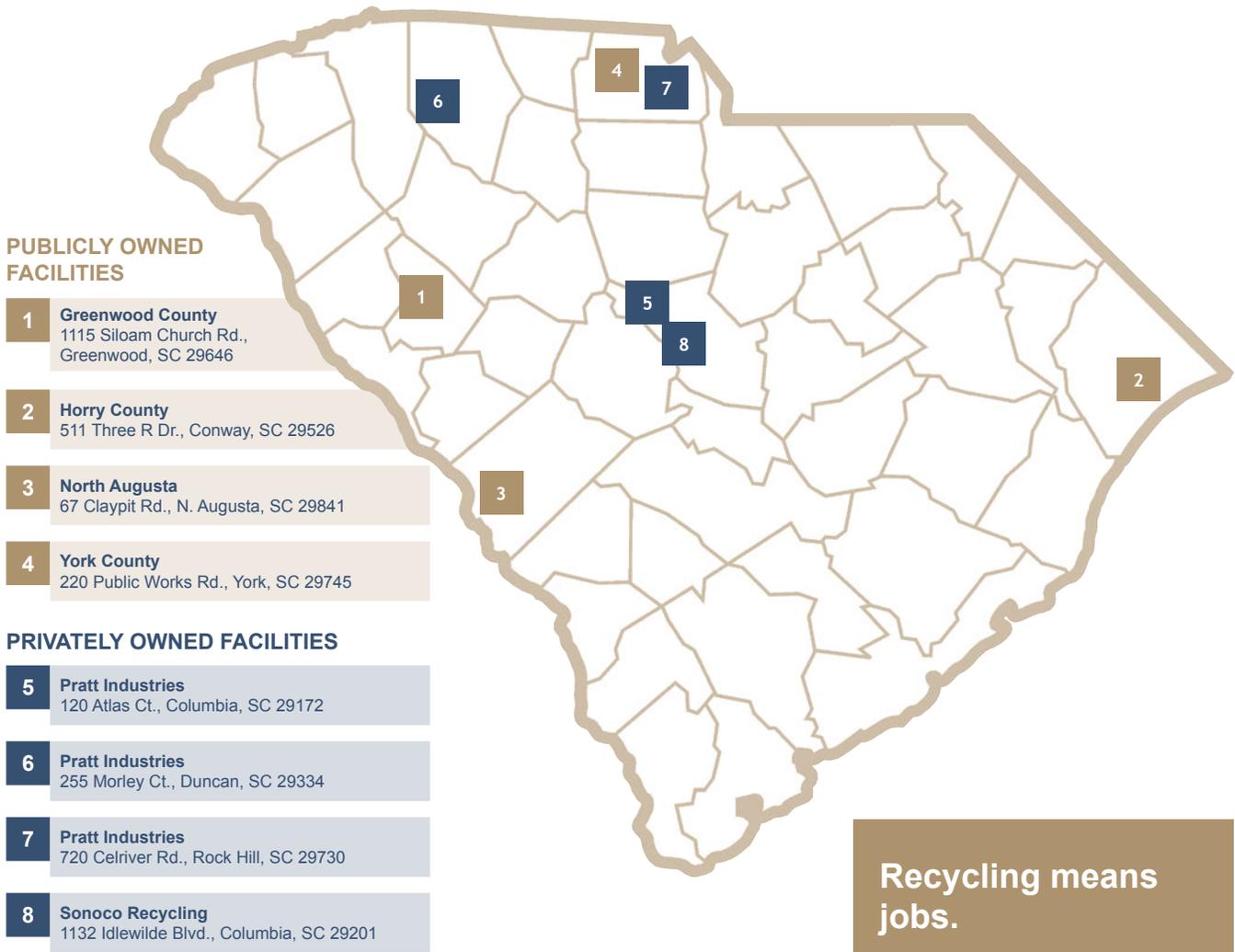
South Carolina's recycling industry has more than 500 companies that collect, haul, process and broker material, sell equipment



and manufacture recycled-content products. These companies – which have created more than 22,000 jobs and have a \$13 billion annual economic impact – have the capacity to manage much of the state's recycling stream.

The recycling industry – which includes 10 plastic reclaimers, four recycled cardboard mills and four electric arc steel mills – continued to grow in 2018. In the past five years, the recycling industry has announced more than \$1.6 billion in investments and created more than 3,400 jobs.

**FIGURE 3.1: South Carolina's Materials Recovery Facilities in FY18**



**Recycling means jobs.**

The plastic recycling industry in the Carolinas is responsible for more than 3,500 jobs and growing.

Recycling more bottles means more jobs. To learn more, visit [yourbottlemeansjobs.com](http://yourbottlemeansjobs.com).



SOURCE: S.C. Department of Commerce Recycling Market Development Division