



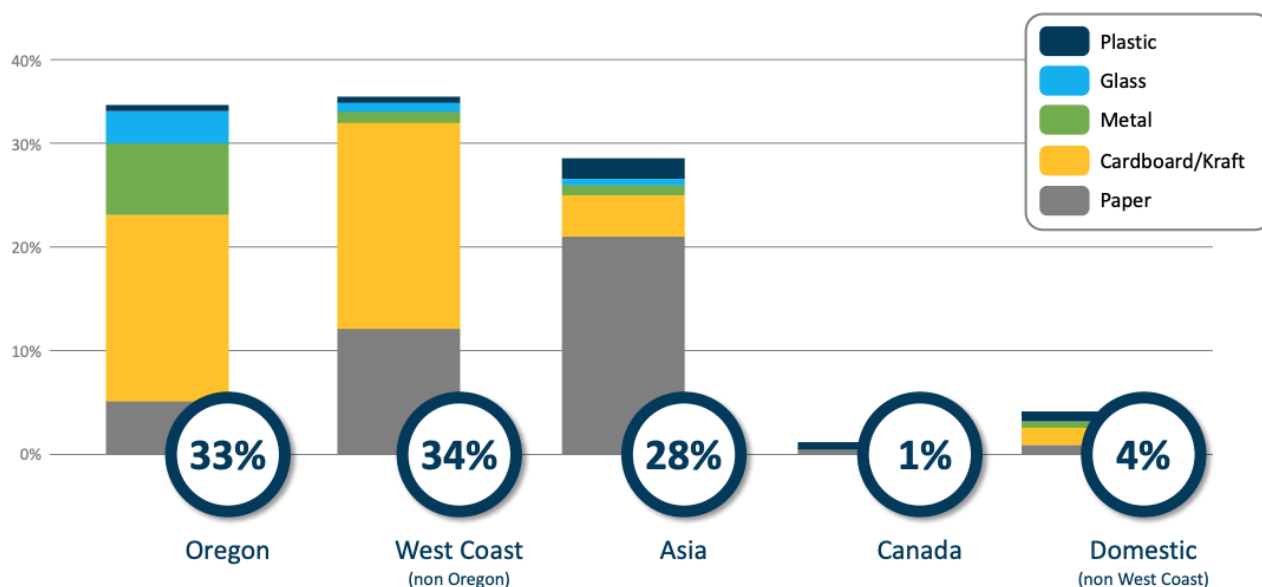
## Recycled Materials Destination Data

A key goal of the 2030 Regional Waste Plan is to manage recycling more responsibly, to ensure that recyclables are processed in a way that minimizes the environmental impact for people and the planet, both in greater Portland and around the world.

When the 2030 Regional Waste Plan (RWP) was adopted, one of the first action items was to collect baseline data to help Metro, stakeholders and partners improve the region's recycling practices. Starting in 2019, Material Recovery Facilities in Portland were required to submit a limited amount of information about where the materials they sorted were sent.

### 2019 key findings highlight areas for improvement

Metro staff has identified key areas for improvement, especially reducing the amount of recycling sent to countries that may not be equipped to safely manage the material.



#### Notes:

- Due to rounding the sum of the destinations may not equal 100%
- Approximately 600 tons (less than 1%) of paper was sent to an international location country not located in Asia.

Initial data shows that at least 28% of all recycling materials processed by regional Material Recovery Facilities are sent directly to destinations in Asia, including 54% of all paper recycling (1% sent to China) and 40% of all plastic recyclables (6% sent to China). For plastic, this equates to enough material to fill 1,800 semi-trailer trucks – lined up end-to-end they would stretch for 23 miles (Portland to Forest Grove).



The true percentage of recycling products being sent abroad could be higher since the data collected by Metro needs more assessment and auditing. Additionally, the data only reflects the first step in the process for many materials, which may be bought and sold multiple times before its further sorted or processed for recycling.

### **Modernizing our recycling system**

Metro is in the process of developing more robust tracking and reporting requirements for facilities that sort recyclables, as part of a larger effort to build a more adaptable and transparent recycling system that reflects the community's values, makes recyclables easier to sell and prevents plastic pollution from further inundating our oceans and communities. The data collected as part of this process will also inform future standards that build equity into Metro's recycling system so that workers – like those who sort recyclable materials – have safer working conditions and living wages. The Metro Council will review research results and options for new requirements in fall 2021.

Data collection efforts at Metro will help inform broader efforts to modernize Oregon's recycling system, including the proposed Plastic Pollution and Recycling Modernization Act SB 582-1A currently under consideration by the Oregon Legislature. The bill would modernize Oregon's outdated recycling system using an approach that includes producers, governments, and the recycling industry. Additional information is available on DEQ's website:

<https://www.oregon.gov/deq/recycling/Pages/Modernizing-Oregons-Recycling-System.aspx>

### **Learn more!**

Additional information about the 2030 Regional Waste plan is available on Metro's website

<https://www.oregonmetro.gov/regional-waste-plan>

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