



December 20, 2019

Timothy Lemmer
Letters Editor
The Wall Street Journal
1211 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10036

Dear Mr. Lemmer:

The Wall Street Journal's December 19 article titled "[Recycling Rethink: What to Do With Trash Now That China Won't Take It](#)" failed to mention aluminum and steel, which have an authentic recycling story. Can manufacturers use these infinitely recyclable materials to make steel food cans and aluminum beverage cans. Unlike the materials mentioned in the article, cans are accepted everywhere, they are relatively easy to sort from the rest of the single-stream materials, and they are simple to recycle since the whole container is recyclable.

Cans have an authentic recycling story because cans are valuable and there is an existing circular system in the United States for cans. Recyclers want the aluminum and steel in cans because they are two of the most valuable materials in the recycling stream. For example, the aluminum beverage can industry's most recent [sustainability key performance indicator report](#) found that aluminum is worth \$1,317/ton; PET plastic is worth \$299/ton and glass is worth –(\$20)/ton. The can industry buys the materials and recycles them into new cans or other useful, recyclable products. That is why the average aluminum beverage can has 73 percent recycled content and the average steel food can has up to 35 percent recycled content. There is no need to wait for the economics to work or for some new recycling technology. Cans are recycled today at scale in the United States; there is a 50 percent recycling rate for aluminum beverage cans and a 71 percent recycling rate for steel food cans.

Portraying the entire recycling system as one where the economics do not work, and all the materials were or are being shipped abroad, overlooks a product made of an infinitely recyclable material that *is* recycled in the United States in large volumes. We encourage *The Wall Street Journal* to please mention cans and its authentic recycling story in future recycling articles.

Sincerely,

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