

# Secondary Materials and Recycled Textiles Association

Representing Wiping Materials, Recycled Clothing & Fiber Industries

7910 Woodmont Ave.

Suite 1130

Bethesda, MD 20814

Ph: 301/718-0671

Fax: 301/656-1079

e-mail: [bernie@smartasn.org](mailto:bernie@smartasn.org)

[www.smartasn.org](http://www.smartasn.org)

## TEXTILE RECYCLING FACT SHEET

- ! The textile recycling industry, with some 2,000 companies, removes annually from the solid waste stream 2.5 billion pounds of post consumer textile product waste.
- ! Between 1990 and 2003, the United States exported nearly 7 billion pounds of used clothing and worn textile products around the world. (World Trade Atlas) The average American throws away about 68 pounds of clothing and textiles per year.
- ! Most of the recycling firms are small, family-owned businesses, with fewer than 500 employees, the majority having between 35 and 50 people. The industry as a whole employs approximately 10,000 semi-skilled and marginally employable workers at the primary processing level, and creates an additional 7,000 jobs at the final processing stage. Primary and secondary processors account for annual gross sales of \$400 million and \$300 million respectively.
- ! Textile recycling firms contribute to the revenue base of federal, state and local governments. In addition, these firms purchase a large percentage of their raw materials from charitable institutions, who in turn use these funds to house, feed, and train the less fortunate.
- ! Industry members are able to recycle 93 percent of the waste they process -- without producing any new hazardous waste or harmful by-products.
- ! Textile recyclers export 61 percent of their products, thus reducing the U.S. trade deficit. Documented export sales of recycled clothing from the U.S. exceeded \$217 million in 1999 (U.S. Census Bureau).
- ! While a few communities have textile recycling programs, about 85 percent of this waste goes to landfills where it occupies about 4 percent of landfill space.

### Breakdown of Recycled Post Consumer Textile Product Waste

	<u>Domestic</u>	<u>Exports</u>	<u>Total</u>
Used clothing	--	35%	35%
Fiber for reprocessing	7%	26%	33%
Wipers	25%	—	25%
Landfill	<u>7%</u>	—	<u>7%</u>
Total	39%	61%	100%