

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Office of Resource Conservation and Recovery

**Documentation for Greenhouse Gas Emission and  
Energy Factors Used in the Waste Reduction Model  
(WARM)**

***Management Practices Chapters***

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## 1 SOURCE REDUCTION

This chapter describes the development of material-specific emission factors for source reduction in EPA's Waste Reduction Model (WARM). Source reduction, or waste prevention, refers to practices that reduce the amount of materials entering the waste stream, including changes in the design, manufacture, purchase or use of materials. This document provides examples of source reduction and a summary of how EPA estimated the GHG benefits from source reduction of materials.

### 1.1 TYPES OF SOURCE REDUCTION

Source reduction can result from any activity that reduces the amount of a material or agricultural input needed and therefore used to make products or food.<sup>1</sup> Some specific examples of source reduction practices are:

- Redesigning products to use fewer materials (e.g., lightweighting, material substitution).
- Reusing products and materials (e.g., a refillable water bottle).
- Extending the useful lifespan of products.
- Avoiding using materials in the first place (e.g., reducing junk mail, reducing demand for uneaten food).

In addition to the activities above, there are limited circumstances where the emission factors can be used to estimate GHG benefits of substituting one material or product for another material or product. Section 1.3.2 presents considerations for estimating the GHG effects of material substitution.

### 1.2 A SUMMARY OF THE GHG IMPLICATIONS OF SOURCE REDUCTION

When a material is source reduced, GHG emissions associated with producing the material and/or manufacturing the product and managing the post-consumer waste are avoided. Consequently, source reduction provides GHG emission benefits by: (1) avoiding the "upstream" GHGs emitted in the raw material acquisition, manufacture or production and transport of the source-reduced material; (2) increasing the amount of carbon stored in forests (when wood and paper products are source reduced); and (3) avoiding the downstream GHG emissions from waste management.

Because many materials are manufactured from a mix of virgin and recycled inputs, the quantity of virgin material production that is avoided is not always equal to the quantity of material source reduced. Therefore, to estimate GHG emissions associated with source reduction, WARM uses a mix of virgin and recycled inputs, based on the national average for each material. However, WARM also allows users to evaluate the benefits of source reducing materials manufactured from 100 percent virgin inputs, instead of a mix of virgin and recycled inputs. For some materials, such as food waste and some wood products, it is either not possible or very uncommon to use recycled inputs during material production, so WARM always assumes material production using 100 percent virgin inputs.

WARM assumes that source reduction of paper and wood products increases the amount of carbon stored in forests by reducing the amount of wood harvested. For more information on the calculations that went into creating the forest carbon storage offset, see the [Forest Carbon Storage](#) chapter.

In order to measure the full GHG impact of source reduction, the user must compare the GHG emissions from source reduction to the GHG emissions of another materials management option. For example, a user could compare the benefits from source reducing one short ton of office paper instead

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<sup>1</sup> The source reduction pathway was added for food waste in June 2014 into WARM Version 13.

of sending the paper to the landfill. This approach enables policy-makers to evaluate, on a per-ton basis, the overall difference in GHG emissions between (1) source reducing one short ton of material, and (2) manufacturing and then managing (post-consumer) one short ton of the same material. For most materials, source reduction has lower GHG emissions than the other materials management options.<sup>2</sup>

Exhibit 1-1 presents the net emissions factors of all management options in order to provide context for the emissions associated with upstream product and material manufacturing characterized by the source reduction emission factors in WARM as compared to other management practices.

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<sup>2</sup> The most notable exception is for aluminum cans, where recycling benefits are higher. For aluminum cans, the net source reduction emissions for the current mix of inputs are smaller than the net recycling emissions. This is because of two factors: (1) the large difference in GHG emissions between virgin and recycled manufacture of aluminum cans and (2) the relatively high recycled content (68 percent) in aluminum cans. In this instance, source reduction is relatively less beneficial because of the high recycled content of a “virgin” can.

**Exhibit 1-1: Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Management Options Modeled in WARM (MTCO<sub>2</sub>E/Short Ton of Material)**

Material	Net Source Reduction Emissions for Current Mix of Inputs	Net Source Reduction Emissions for 100% Virgin Inputs	Net Recycling Emissions	Net Composting Emissions	Net Combustion Emissions	Net Landfilling Emissions	Net Wet Anaerobic Digestion with curing	Net Wet Anaerobic Digestion with Direct Application	Net Dry Anaerobic Digestion with curing	Net Dry Anaerobic Digestion with Direct Application
Corrugated Containers	(5.58)	(8.09)	(3.14)	NA	(0.49)	0.18	NA	NA	NA	NA
Magazines/Third-class Mail	(8.57)	(8.86)	(3.07)	NA	(0.35)	(0.43)	NA	NA	NA	NA
Newspaper	(4.68)	(5.74)	(2.71)	NA	(0.56)	(0.85)	NA	NA	NA	NA
Office Paper	(7.95)	(8.23)	(2.86)	NA	(0.47)	1.13	NA	NA	NA	NA
Phonebooks	(6.17)	(6.17)	(2.62)	NA	(0.56)	(0.85)	NA	NA	NA	NA
Textbooks	(9.02)	(9.32)	(3.10)	NA	(0.47)	1.13	NA	NA	NA	NA
Mixed Paper (general)	(6.07)	(7.61)	(3.55)	NA	(0.49)	0.07	NA	NA	NA	NA
Mixed Paper (primarily residential)	(6.00)	(7.64)	(3.55)	NA	(0.49)	0.02	NA	NA	NA	NA
Mixed Paper (primarily from offices)	(7.37)	(7.93)	(3.58)	NA	(0.45)	0.11	NA	NA	NA	NA
Food Waste	(3.66)	(3.66)	NA	(0.15)	(0.13)	0.50	(0.06)	(0.14)	(0.04)	(0.10)
Food Waste (non-meat)	(0.76)	(0.76)	NA	(0.15)	(0.13)	0.50	(0.06)	(0.14)	(0.04)	(0.10)
Food Waste (meat only)	(15.10)	(15.10)	NA	(0.15)	(0.13)	0.46	(0.06)	(0.14)	(0.04)	(0.10)
Beef	(30.09)	(30.09)	NA	(0.15)	(0.13)	0.43	(0.06)	(0.14)	(0.04)	(0.10)
Poultry	(2.45)	(2.45)	NA	(0.15)	(0.13)	0.49	(0.06)	(0.14)	(0.04)	(0.10)
Grains	(0.62)	(0.62)	NA	(0.15)	(0.13)	1.37	(0.06)	(0.14)	(0.04)	(0.10)
Bread	(0.66)	(0.66)	NA	(0.15)	(0.13)	0.99	(0.06)	(0.14)	(0.04)	(0.10)
Fruits and Vegetables	(0.44)	(0.44)	NA	(0.15)	(0.13)	0.23	(0.06)	(0.14)	(0.04)	(0.10)
Dairy Products	(1.75)	(1.75)	NA	(0.15)	(0.13)	0.48	(0.06)	(0.14)	(0.04)	(0.10)
Yard Trimmings	NA	NA	NA	(0.11)	(0.17)	(0.20)	NA	NA	(0.09)	(0.35)
Grass	NA	NA	NA	(0.11)	(0.17)	0.12	NA	NA	0.00	(0.06)
Leaves	NA	NA	NA	(0.11)	(0.17)	(0.53)	NA	NA	(0.14)	(0.53)
Branches	NA	NA	NA	(0.11)	(0.17)	(0.54)	NA	NA	(0.22)	(0.73)
HDPE	(1.42)	(1.52)	(0.76)	NA	1.29	0.02	NA	NA	NA	NA
LDPE	(1.80)	(1.80)	NA	NA	1.29	0.02	NA	NA	NA	NA
PET	(2.17)	(2.21)	(1.04)	NA	1.24	0.02	NA	NA	NA	NA
LLDPE	(1.58)	(1.58)	NA	NA	1.29	0.02	NA	NA	NA	NA
PP	(1.52)	(1.54)	(0.79)	NA	1.29	0.02	NA	NA	NA	NA
PS	(2.50)	(2.50)	NA	NA	1.65	0.02	NA	NA	NA	NA
PVC	(1.93)	(1.93)	NA	NA	0.66	0.02	NA	NA	NA	NA
Mixed Plastics	(1.87)	(1.94)	(0.93)	NA	1.26	0.02	NA	NA	NA	NA
PLA	(2.45)	(2.45)	NA	(0.13)	(0.63)	(1.64)	NA	NA	NA	NA

Material	Net Source Reduction Emissions for Current Mix of Inputs	Net Source Reduction Emissions for 100% Virgin Inputs	Net Recycling Emissions	Net Composting Emissions	Net Combustion Emissions	Net Landfilling Emissions	Net Wet Anaerobic Digestion with curing	Net Wet Anaerobic Digestion with Direct Application	Net Dry Anaerobic Digestion with curing	Net Dry Anaerobic Digestion with Direct Application
Desktop CPUs	(20.86)	(20.86)	(1.49)	NA	(0.66)	0.02	NA	NA	NA	NA
Portable Electronic Devices	(29.83)	(29.83)	(1.06)	NA	0.65	0.02	NA	NA	NA	NA
Flat-Panel Displays	(24.19)	(24.19)	(0.99)	NA	0.03	0.02	NA	NA	NA	NA
CRT Displays	NA	NA	(0.57)	NA	0.45	0.02	NA	NA	NA	NA
Electronic Peripherals	(10.32)	(10.32)	(0.36)	NA	2.08	0.02	NA	NA	NA	NA
Hard-Copy Devices	(7.65)	(7.65)	(0.56)	NA	1.20	0.02	NA	NA	NA	NA
Mixed Electronics	(20.79)	(20.79)	(0.90)	NA	0.34	0.02	NA	NA	NA	NA
Aluminum Cans	(4.80)	(10.99)	(9.13)	NA	0.03	0.02	NA	NA	NA	NA
Aluminum Ingot	(7.48)	(7.48)	(7.20)	NA	0.03	0.02	NA	NA	NA	NA
Steel Cans	(3.03)	(3.64)	(1.83)	NA	(1.59)	0.02	NA	NA	NA	NA
Copper Wire	(6.72)	(6.78)	(4.49)	NA	0.03	0.02	NA	NA	NA	NA
Mixed Metals	(3.65)	(6.22)	(4.39)	NA	(1.02)	0.02	NA	NA	NA	NA
Glass	(0.53)	(0.60)	(0.28)	NA	0.03	0.02	NA	NA	NA	NA
Asphalt Concrete	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.08)	NA	NA	0.02	NA	NA	NA	NA
Asphalt Shingles	(0.19)	(0.19)	(0.09)	NA	(0.35)	0.02	NA	NA	NA	NA
Carpet	(3.68)	(3.68)	(2.38)	NA	1.10	0.02	NA	NA	NA	NA
Clay Bricks	(0.27)	(0.27)	NA	NA	NA	0.02	NA	NA	NA	NA
Concrete	NA	NA	(0.01)	NA	NA	0.02	NA	NA	NA	NA
Dimensional Lumber	(2.11)	(2.11)	(1.66) <sup>a</sup>	NA	(0.58)	(0.92)	NA	NA	NA	NA
Drywall	(0.22)	(0.22)	0.03	NA	NA	(0.06)	NA	NA	NA	NA
Fiberglass Insulation	(0.38)	(0.48)	NA	NA	NA	0.02	NA	NA	NA	NA
Fly Ash	NA	NA	(0.87)	NA	NA	0.02	NA	NA	NA	NA
Medium-density Fiberboard	(2.41)	(2.41)	NA	NA	(0.58)	(0.85)	NA	NA	NA	NA
Structural Steel	(1.67)	(3.42)	(1.93)	NA	NA	0.02	NA	NA	NA	NA
Vinyl Flooring	(0.58)	(0.58)	NA	NA	(0.31)	0.02	NA	NA	NA	NA
Wood Flooring	(4.03)	(4.03)	(3.68)	NA	(0.74)	(0.86)	NA	NA	NA	NA
Tires	(4.30)	(4.46)	(0.38)	NA	0.50	0.02	NA	NA	NA	NA
Mixed Recyclables	NA	NA	(2.80)	NA	(0.42)	0.03	NA	NA	NA	NA
Mixed Organics	NA	NA	NA	(0.13)	(0.15)	0.18	NA	NA	(0.06)	(0.21)
Mixed MSW	NA	NA	NA	NA	0.01	0.31	NA	NA	NA	NA

<sup>a</sup> Modeled as Reuse in WARM.

### 1.3 APPLYING EMISSION FACTORS TO SPECIFIC SOURCE REDUCTION STRATEGIES

#### 1.3.1 Calculating the Energy and GHG Emissions Benefits of Reuse

The GHG and energy benefits of reusing non-food materials or products multiple times before they are sent for end-of-life management can be modeled using the source reduction pathway in WARM. The process for calculating the GHG and energy benefits of reuse is as follows:

1. Using the downloadable (i.e., Excel-based) version of WARM, run the model using a baseline scenario of landfilling, recycling, combustion or composting (depending on the likely fate of the material or product if it is not reused), and an alternate scenario of source reduction. For example, if the item was originally destined for a landfill and now will be reused, the baseline scenario is landfilling.
2. Select whether the reused material is manufactured from 100 percent virgin inputs or the current mix of virgin and recycled inputs.<sup>3</sup> (The assumption that the material is manufactured from 100 percent virgin inputs indicates an upper bound estimate of the benefits from reuse.)
3. Multiply the GHG emissions reduction result (i.e., “total change in GHG emissions” from WARM) by the number of times the material is reused. The reuse number should equal one less than the number of total uses to account for the production of the initial material.

This methodology for calculating the GHG benefits from reuse is summarized in the following formula. Energy use can be similarly calculated by replacing the GHG emission factors with energy use factors.

$$GHG\ Benefits\ of\ Reuse = (N - 1) \times (A)$$

Where,

N = Number of total uses

A = GHG benefits of the source reduction (alternate) pathway minus the baseline pathway (i.e., “total change in GHG emissions” from WARM)

For example, consider reusable HDPE plastic crates, weighing 1,000 short tons total, used for transporting bread to a grocery store. Assume that the crates are typically recycled after each use, but could be reused up to 20 times before they are recycled. To calculate the GHG benefits of reusing the crates, the user can run WARM using a baseline of recycling 1,000 short tons HDPE and an alternate scenario of source reducing 1,000 short tons HDPE. Assuming that reusing the crates offsets the production of HDPE crates that would otherwise have been manufactured from 100 percent virgin inputs, WARM’s results indicate that source reduction of 1,000 short tons of HDPE crates results in a net emissions reduction of 760 MTCO<sub>2</sub>E relative to the baseline recycling scenario.<sup>4</sup>

The GHG benefits should then be multiplied by 19 reuses (i.e., 20 total uses – 1 original use). Energy use can be similarly calculated by replacing the GHG emission factors with energy use factors. In equation form:

<sup>3</sup> Some materials modeled in WARM utilize 100 percent virgin materials in the “current mix” of inputs. This is in cases where information on the share of recycled inputs used in production is unavailable or is not a common practice.

<sup>4</sup> If reusing the crates offsets crates that would otherwise have been manufactured from the current mix of virgin and recycled inputs, source reduction of 1,000 short tons HDPE would result in a net emissions reduction of 661 MTCO<sub>2</sub>E relative to the baseline recycling scenario.



*GHG Benefits of Reuse = 19 × (source reduction of 1,000 short tons HDPE – recycling of 1,000 short tons HDPE)*

**100% virgin inputs (upper bound for reductions):**

*GHG Benefits of Reuse = 19 × (760 MTCO<sub>2</sub>E) = 14,440 MTCO<sub>2</sub>E*

### 1.3.2 Calculating the Energy and GHG Emissions Benefits of Material Substitution

The analysis of source reduction is based on an assumption that source reduction is achieved by practices such as lightweighting, double-sided copying and material reuse. However, it is also possible to source reduce one type of material by substituting another material. The GHG impact of this type of source reduction is the net GHG benefits from source reduction of the original material and manufacturing and disposing of the substitute material.

Where both the original material and the substitute material are available in WARM, the GHG impacts of source reduction with material substitution may be estimated as long as users verify that the material production and end-of-life pathways in WARM are representative of the materials involved in the substitution. However, for cases where one of the materials in the substitution pair is not in WARM, the user will only be able to calculate the GHG impact of the material used (without a comparison with the potential substitute). The large number of materials that could be substituted for the materials available in WARM, and the need for specific information on application of material substitution, make an analysis of all potential substitutions prohibitive and highly uncertain.

In the case where both the material being replaced and its substitute are in WARM, the GHG benefits can be estimated as described below. Note that this calculation cannot be run in WARM because WARM requires the user to have the same material in the baseline and alternate scenarios:

1. Calculate the GHG emissions from manufacturing and end-of-life management of the original material that will be replaced by the substitute material (i.e., the baseline scenario; see equations below for an explanation of this calculation).
2. Calculate the GHG emissions from manufacturing and end-of-life management of the substitute material (i.e., the alternate scenario; see equations below for an explanation of this calculation).
3. Calculate the mass substitution rate. The mass substitution rate is the number of tons of substitute material used per ton of original material. For example, one ton of plastic containers may serve the same function as two tons of glass containers. In this case, the mass substitution rate would be 50%. In calculating the mass substitution rate, users should also account for any difference in the number of times that a product made from the original material is used prior to waste management, compared to the number of times a product made from the substitute material will be used prior to waste management.
4. Calculate the net GHG benefits by subtracting the GHG emissions that would have been generated to produce the baseline material from the GHG emissions generated by producing an equivalent amount of the substitute materials.

This basic methodology for calculating the GHG benefits of material substitution is summarized in the following formula. Energy use can be similarly calculated by replacing the GHG emission factors with energy use factors.

$$GHG\ Benefits\ of\ Material\ Substitution = (EF_{alternate\ material} * MS - EF_{baseline\ material})$$

Where,

$EF_{\text{alternate material}}$  = GHG emissions from production and end-of-life management of the substitute material per unit of substitute material

$EF_{\text{baseline material}}$  = GHG emissions from production and end-of-life management of the original material per unit of original material

MS = Material substitution rate i.e., amount of substitute material required to replace a unit of the original material

Because source reduction GHG emission factors represent the benefits of avoided production of materials, the GHG emissions generated by the production of materials can be calculated by taking the absolute value of WARM's source reduction factors. The energy or GHG emissions from end-of-life management can be calculated using the various end-of-life materials management factors in WARM (e.g., recycling, composting, combustion or landfilling). Consequently, the  $EF_{\text{alternative material}}$  and  $EF_{\text{baseline material}}$  terms are equal to:

$$EF_{\text{alternate material}} = -EF_{\text{source reduction, alternate material}} + EF_{\text{end-of-life management, alternate material}}$$

$$EF_{\text{baseline material}} = -EF_{\text{source reduction, baseline material}} + EF_{\text{end-of-life management, baseline material}}$$

Where,

$EF_{\text{source reduction}}$  = WARM emission factor for source reduction of the baseline and alternative materials

$EF_{\text{end-of-life management}}$  = WARM emission factor for the end-of-life management practice (recycling, composting, combustion or landfilling) used to manage the baseline and alternative materials

### 1.3.3 Calculating the Energy and GHG Emissions Benefits of Material Choice Across Material Life

In the case where only one material is available in WARM and not the substitute, a WARM user can still calculate the total GHG impact across material life, including both upstream manufacturing and downstream materials management. Source reduction GHG emission factors represent the benefits of avoided production of materials. Therefore, the GHG emissions generated by the production of materials can be calculated by taking the absolute value of WARM's source reduction factors. The energy or GHG emissions from end-of-life management can be calculated using the various end-of-life materials management factors in WARM (i.e., recycling, composting, anaerobic digestion, combustion, or landfilling). Using this approach, the energy and GHG emission impacts across the life of a material can be calculated for baseline and alternative options using the following equations:

$$EF_{\text{baseline material}} = -EF_{\text{source reduction, baseline material}} + EF_{\text{end-of-life management, baseline material}}$$

$$EF_{\text{alternate material}} = -EF_{\text{source reduction, alternate material}} + EF_{\text{end-of-life management, alternate material}}$$

Where,

$EF_{\text{source reduction}}$  = WARM emission factor for source reduction of the baseline and alternative materials

$EF_{\text{end-of-life management}}$  = WARM emission factor for the end-of-life management practice (recycling, composting, anaerobic digestion, combustion or landfilling) used to manage the baseline and alternative materials

Production and end-of-life impacts are automatically calculated and visually displayed in the “Production + EOL” tabs within the WARM tool. See the [Production and End-of-Life Impacts](#) chapter for additional information on the calculations and the visualizations.

#### 1.4 LIMITATIONS

Because the data presented in this chapter were developed using data presented in the raw materials and acquisition section of the [Overview](#) chapter (and the [Forest Carbon Storage](#) chapter), the limitations discussed there also apply to the values presented here. Other limitations include:

- The source reduction factors for food waste materials are meant to capture the emissions avoided through waste reduction. They are the closest pathway available in WARM to approximate the benefits from food reuse and donation, but they likely overstate the benefits. Applying source reduction factors to donated materials assumes that the donation completely offsets the use of new materials, but this may not be the case. For example, edible food can be donated to feed hungry people, and while this may offset the demand for other food, it is unlikely that the donation will entirely offset the production of an equivalent amount of food. Also, food donations could be reused for other purposes such as feed for livestock, which would instead offset the production of traditional livestock feed. EPA is conducting research into how to address food donation and food waste reuse in WARM.
- WARM allows users to model source reduction for several mixed material types: mixed paper (all types), mixed metals, mixed plastics, food waste, food waste (meat only), and food waste (non-meat). For these mixed material categories, all components can be individually source reduced in WARM and users could reasonably implement activities or purchasing practices that would reduce a representative mix of these materials. The other mixed materials in WARM—mixed recyclables, mixed organics, and mixed MSW—cannot be source reduced because they contain a broader mixture of materials at end-of-life where users could not reasonably implement activities or purchasing practices that reduce demand for all components. Additionally, mixed MSW and mixed organics include waste materials for which there is no source reduction pathway in WARM.
- There may be additional GHG impacts from disposal of industrial wastes, particularly paper sludge at paper mills. Because of the complexity of analyzing these second-order effects and the lack of data, EPA did not include them.

## 2 RECYCLING

This chapter describes the development of material-specific emission factors for recycling in EPA's Waste Reduction Model (WARM). A discussion of forest carbon storage, an important input in calculating the emission benefits of paper product recycling, is also included in this chapter.

### 2.1 A SUMMARY OF THE GHG IMPLICATIONS OF RECYCLING

EPA defines recycling as “the separation and collection of wastes, their subsequent transformation or remanufacture into usable or marketable products or materials, and the purchase of products made from recyclable materials” (EPA, 2012). WARM considers the recycling of post-consumer materials, which are defined as a “material or finished product that has served its intended use and has been diverted or recovered from waste destined for disposal, having completed its life as a consumer item” (EPA, 2014).

Recycling is a process that takes materials or products that are at end of life and transforms them into either (1) the same product or (2) a secondary product (see discussion of open- and closed-loop recycling). When a material is recycled, it is used in place of virgin inputs in the manufacturing process, rather than being disposed of and managed as waste. Consequently, recycling provides GHG reduction benefits in two ways, depending upon the material recycled: (1) it offsets a portion of “upstream” GHGs emitted in raw material acquisition, manufacture and transport of virgin inputs and materials, and (2) it increases the amount of carbon stored in forests (when wood and paper products are recycled).

In calculating the first source of GHG reduction benefits, WARM assumes that recycling materials does not cause a change in the amount of materials that would otherwise have been manufactured. Because the amount of products manufactured stays the same, and the existing demand for recycled content is the same, an increase in recycling leads to a displacement of virgin-sourced materials.

For more information on the second source of GHG reduction benefits that are provided by forest carbon storage, see the [Forest Carbon Storage](#) chapter.

#### 2.1.1 Open- and Closed-Loop Recycling

Recycling processes can be broadly classified into two different categories: open-loop and closed-loop recycling. Most of the materials in WARM are modeled in a closed-loop recycling process, where end-of-life products are recycled into the same product. An example of a closed-loop recycling process is recycling an aluminum can back into another aluminum can. Decisions about whether to model materials in an open-loop or closed-loop process are based on how the material is most often recycled and the availability of data.

For materials recycled in an open loop, the products of the recycling process (secondary product) are not the same as the inputs (primary product). In open-loop emission factors, the GHG benefits of material recycling result from the avoided emissions associated with the virgin manufacture of the *secondary* products that the material is recycled into. Open-loop recycling does not account for avoided emissions from manufacturing the primary material, since recycling the recycled material does not displace manufacturing of the primary material. It only displaces manufacturing of the secondary product. For example, electronics are recycled by dismantling the products and recovering and processing the raw materials it contains for use in secondary products. Consequently, WARM calculates the GHG benefit from recycling electronics based on the emissions displaced from extracting and producing these secondary products from virgin inputs, rather than on the emissions displaced from manufacturing an entire new electronic product. In applying this method, EPA considered only the GHG

benefit for one generation of recycling (i.e., future benefits from recycling the secondary products into additional products were not included).

The materials modeled as open-loop recycling processes in WARM are: mixed paper, corrugated containers (partial open-loop),<sup>5</sup> copper wire, carpet, electronics, concrete, tires, fly ash, asphalt shingles and drywall (partial open-loop).<sup>6</sup> Corrugated containers and drywall are modeled as partial open-loop because the recycling emission factors for these materials are a weighted average of a closed-loop recycling pathway and an open-loop recycling pathway (e.g., 70 percent of recycled corrugated containers are used in production of more corrugated containers, and 30 percent of corrugated containers are recycled into boxboard). Fly ash is a special case: because it is a byproduct rather than a primary product, it would be impossible to recycle into additional primary product. For more detail on any of the materials mentioned, please refer to the material-specific chapter.

### 2.1.2 Material Losses

When any material is recovered for recycling, some portion of the recovered material is unsuitable for use as a recycled input. This portion is discarded either in the recovery stage (i.e., at collection and at the materials recovery facility) or in the manufacturing stage. Consequently, more than one short ton of material must be recovered and processed to produce one short ton of new material from the recycling process. Material losses are quantified and translated into loss rates. In this analysis, EPA used estimates of loss rates provided by Franklin Associates, Limited (FAL, 2003), for steel, dimensional lumber and medium-density fiberboard (the same materials for which FAL's energy data were used, as described in the Source Reduction chapter). Loss rates for a number of other materials were based on data compiled by EPA's Office of Research and Development (ORD) and the Research Triangle Institute (RTI, 2004). Material-specific sources were consulted for the remaining materials. These values are shown in Exhibit 2-1.

**Exhibit 2-1: Loss Rates for Recovered Materials**

(a)  Material	(b)  % of Recovered Materials Retained in the Recovery Stage	(c)  Short Tons of Product Made per Short Ton of Recycled Inputs in the Manufacturing Stage	(d)  Short Tons of Product Made per Short Ton Recovered Materials (d = b × c)	(e)  Data Source <sup>a</sup>
Aluminum Cans	100	0.93	0.93	RTI, 2004
Aluminum Ingot	100	0.93	0.93	Aluminum cans used as proxy
Steel Cans	100	0.98	0.98	FAL, 2003
Copper Wire	82	0.99	0.81	FAL, 2003
Glass	90	0.98	0.88	FAL, 2003; RTI, 2004
HDPE	91	0.84	0.76	FAL, 2018
PET	91	0.85	0.77	FAL, 2018
PP	91	0.85	0.78	FAL, 2018
Corrugated Containers	100	0.93	0.93	FAL, 2003; RTI, 2004

<sup>5</sup> Note that corrugated containers are modeled using a partial open-loop recycling process. Roughly 70 percent of the recycled corrugated containers are closed-loop (i.e., replaces virgin corrugated) and 30 percent is open-loop (i.e., replaces boxboard).

<sup>6</sup> Most recycled drywall is used for a variety of agricultural purposes, but can also be recycled back into new drywall. Approximately 20 percent of recycled drywall is closed-loop (i.e., replaces virgin drywall) and 80 percent is open-loop (i.e., used for agricultural purposes).

(a)  Material	(b)  % of Recovered Materials Retained in the Recovery Stage	(c)  Short Tons of Product Made per Short Ton of Recycled Inputs in the Manufacturing Stage	(d)  Short Tons of Product Made per Short Ton Recovered Materials (d = b × c)	(e)  Data Source <sup>a</sup>
Magazines/Third-Class Mail	95	0.71	0.67	FAL, 2003; RTI, 2004
Newspaper	95	0.94	0.90	FAL, 2003; RTI, 2004
Office Paper	91	0.66	0.60	FAL, 2003; RTI, 2004
Phone Books	95	0.71	0.68	FAL, 2003; RTI, 2004
Textbooks	95	0.69	0.66	FAL, 2003; RTI, 2004
Dimensional Lumber	80	1.00	0.80	Bergman et al., 2013
Desktop CPUs	100	See note b	See note b	See note b
Portable Electronic Devices	100	See note b	See note b	See note b
Flat-panel Displays	100	See note b	See note b	See note b
CRT Displays	100	See note b	See note b	See note b
Electronic Peripherals	100	See note b	See note b	See note b
Hard-copy Devices	100	See note b	See note b	See note b
Mixed Electronics	100	See note b	See note b	See note b
Carpet	100	1.00	1.00	FAL 2002a; see note c
Concrete	100	1.00	1.00	See note d
Fly Ash	100	1.00	1.00	See note d
Tires	90	0.86	0.80	Corti & Lombardi, 2004
Asphalt Concrete	100	1.00	1.00	Levis 2008 <sup>e</sup>
Asphalt Shingles	100	0.07	0.93	Berenyi, 2007
Drywall	100	1.00	1.00	WRAP, 2008
Structural Steel	98	0.87	0.85	World Steel Association, 2015; AISC, 2015

<sup>a</sup> Franklin Associates, Ltd. (FAL) provided data for column (b), while the Research Triangle Institute (RTI) provided data for column (c).

<sup>b</sup> The rate at which recycled inputs are recovered for new products in the manufacturing stage varies by electronic component. See the [Electronics](#) chapter for more detail.

<sup>c</sup> A 0.5% loss rate was assumed for molded products from carpet recycling, based on data provided by FAL (2002a). No loss was assumed for the carpet pad/cushion and carpet backing. Since molded products make up 25% of the materials recovered from recycling carpet, the loss rate was weighted by this percentage to calculate the overall amount of material retained:  $(100\% - 0.05\% \times 25\%)/100 = 1.00$ .

<sup>d</sup> Due to the nature of the recycling process for fly ash and concrete, these materials are collected and recycled on a ton-per-ton basis, offsetting the production of portland cement and virgin aggregates, respectively.

<sup>e</sup> Loss rates for recycling asphalt concrete are less than 1% by mass. Because the recovered asphalt concrete is extremely valuable and typically recovered on-site, the retention rate for recovered asphalt concrete is quite high.

**Explanatory notes:** The value in column (b) accounts for losses such as recovered newspapers that were unsuitable for recycling because they were too wet. Column (c) reflects process waste losses at the manufacturing plant or mill. Column (d) is the product of the values in columns (b) and (c).

### 2.1.3 Calculating the GHG Impacts of Recycling

WARM assesses the GHG emission implications of recycling from the point of waste generation (i.e., starting at the point when the material is collected for recycling) through the point where the recycled material or product has been manufactured into a new product for use. This includes all of the GHG emissions associated with collecting, transporting, processing and recycling or manufacturing the recycled material into a new product for use. To account for the emissions associated with virgin

manufacture, WARM calculates a “recycled input credit” by assuming that the recycled material avoids—or offsets—the upstream GHG emissions associated with producing the same amount of material from virgin inputs.

The approach for calculating the recycled input credit depends upon whether the material is recycled in a closed- or open-loop process. GHG emission reductions associated with closed-loop manufacture using recycled inputs are calculated by taking the difference between (1) the GHG emissions from manufacturing a material (accounting for loss rates) from 100 percent recycled inputs, and (2) the GHG emissions from manufacturing an equivalent amount of the material from 100 percent virgin inputs.

For open-loop recycling processes, the emission reductions are calculated by taking the difference between (1) the GHG emissions from manufacturing a secondary product from 100 percent recycled inputs, and (2) the GHG emissions from manufacturing an equivalent amount of the secondary product (accounting for loss rates) from 100 percent virgin inputs.

The methodology for estimating resource acquisition and manufacturing emissions is described in the [WARM Background and Overview](#) chapter. There are separate estimates for manufacturing process emissions for virgin inputs and recycled inputs, and transportation for virgin inputs and recycled inputs. For details on the components of the manufacturing process and transportation inputs, see the [WARM Background and Overview](#) chapter.

The recycling GHG emission factors are provided in the chapters corresponding to each individual material modeled in WARM. These GHG emission factors represent the GHG emissions associated with recycling each material into a new product for use, minus a GHG emission offset for avoiding the manufacture of an equivalent amount of the product from virgin inputs.

In evaluating the relative GHG reduction benefits of recycling compared to an existing materials management practice (i.e., evaluating the benefits of recycling relative to source reduction, composting, combustion or landfilling), the recycling GHG emission factors developed in WARM must be compared against the corresponding emission factors for the existing management practice. For example, to evaluate the GHG emission reductions from recycling one short ton of aluminum cans instead of sending the same quantity to the landfill, the GHG emission factor for landfilling one short ton of aluminum cans must be subtracted from the recycling emission factor for aluminum cans. Please see the [WARM Background and Overview](#) chapter for additional explanation of the comparative aspect of WARM emission factors.

## 2.2 RESULTS

The national average results of this analysis are shown in Exhibit 2-2. The net GHG emission reductions from recycling of each material are shown in column (f). As stated earlier, these estimates of net GHG emissions are expressed for recycling in absolute terms, and are not values relative to another waste management option, although they must be used comparatively, as all WARM emission factors must be. They are expressed in terms of short tons of waste input (i.e., tons of waste prior to processing).

**Exhibit 2-2: Emission Factor for Recycling (MTCO<sub>2</sub>E/Short Ton of Material Recovered)**

(a) Material	(b) Recycled Input Credit: <sup>a</sup> Process Energy	(c) Recycled Input Credit: <sup>a</sup> Transportation Energy	(d) Recycled Input Credit: <sup>a</sup> Process Non-Energy	(e) Forest Carbon Storage	(f) GHG Reductions from Using Recycled Inputs Instead of Virgin Inputs (f = b + c + d + e)
Aluminum Cans	(5.37)	(0.04)	(3.72)	–	(9.13)
Aluminum Ingot	(4.00)	(0.03)	(3.18)	–	(7.20)
Steel Cans	(1.79)	(0.04)	–	–	(1.83)
Copper Wire	(4.44)	(0.05)	–	–	(4.49)
Glass	(0.12)	(0.02)	(0.14)	–	(0.28)
HDPE	(0.59)	(0.01)	(0.15)	–	(0.76)
LDPE	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
PET	(0.77)	0.03	(0.30)	–	(1.04)
LLDPE	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
PP	(0.65)	0.02	(0.16)	–	(0.79)
PS	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
PVC	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
PLA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Corrugated Containers	(0.02)	(0.05)	(0.01)	(3.06)	(3.14)
Magazines/Third-Class Mail	(0.01)	–	–	(3.06)	(3.07)
Newspaper	(0.66)	(0.03)	–	(2.02)	(2.71)
Office Paper	0.21	–	(0.02)	(3.06)	(2.86)
Phone Books	(0.61)	–	–	(2.02)	(2.62)
Textbooks	(0.05)	–	–	(3.06)	(3.10)
Dimensional Lumber <sup>b</sup>	(0.10)	–	–	(1.56)	(1.66)
Medium-Density Fiberboard	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Food Waste	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Food Waste (meat only)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Food Waste (non-meat)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Beef	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Poultry	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Grains	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Bread	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Fruits and Vegetables	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Dairy Products	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Yard Trimmings	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Grass	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Leaves	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Branches	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Mixed Paper (general)	(0.38)	(0.11)	(0.01)	(3.06)	(3.55)
Mixed Paper (primarily residential)	(0.38)	(0.11)	(0.01)	(3.06)	(3.55)
Mixed Paper (primarily from offices)	(0.41)	(0.11)	(0.00)	(3.06)	(3.58)
Mixed Metals	(3.05)	(0.04)	(1.31)	–	(4.39)
Mixed Plastics	(0.70)	0.01	(0.24)	–	(0.93)
Mixed Recyclables	(0.21)	(0.04)	(0.07)	(2.49)	(2.80)
Mixed Organics	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Mixed MSW	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Carpet	(1.43)	(0.01)	(0.94)	–	(2.38)
Desktop CPUs	(1.47)	0.00	(0.04)	–	(1.49)
Portable Electronic Devices	(1.14)	0.01	0.04	–	(1.06)
Flat-panel Displays	(1.00)	0.01	(0.02)	–	(0.99)
CRT Displays	(0.55)	0.00	(0.04)	–	(0.57)



(a)  Material	(b)  Recycled Input Credit: <sup>a</sup> Process Energy	(c)  Recycled Input Credit: <sup>a</sup> Transportation Energy	(d)  Recycled Input Credit: <sup>a</sup> Process Non-Energy	(e)  Forest Carbon Storage	(f)  GHG Reductions from Using Recycled Inputs Instead of Virgin Inputs (f = b + c + d + e)
Electronic Peripherals	(0.38)	0.02	(0.03)	–	(0.36)
Hard-Copy Devices	(0.56)	0.00	(0.02)	–	(0.56)
Mixed Electronics	(0.91)	0.01	(0.02)	–	(0.90)
Clay Bricks	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Concrete	(0.00)	(0.01)	–	–	(0.01)
Fly Ash	(0.42)	–	(0.45)	–	(0.87)
Tires	(0.46)	0.08	–	–	(0.38)
Asphalt Concrete	(0.03)	(0.05)	–	NA	(0.08)
Asphalt Shingles	(0.11)	0.02	–	NA	(0.09)
Drywall	–	0.02	–	–	0.03
Fiberglass Insulation	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Structural Steel	(1.06)	(0.10)	(0.78)	NA	(1.93)
Vinyl Flooring	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Wood Flooring	(0.16)	(0.17)	0.00	(3.26)	(3.68)

NA = Not applicable. For the plastic resin material types, only HDPE, PET, and PP recycling are modeled in WARM due to LCI data availability.

– = Zero emissions.

Note that totals may not add due to rounding, and more digits may be displayed than are significant. Negative values denote GHG emission reductions or carbon storage.

<sup>a</sup> Material that is recycled after use is then substituted for virgin inputs in the production of new products. This credit represents the difference in emissions that results from using recycled inputs rather than virgin inputs. The credit accounts for loss rates in collection, processing and remanufacturing. Recycling credit is based on closed- and open-loop recycling, depending on material.

<sup>b</sup> Modeled as Reuse in WARM.

## 2.3 LIMITATIONS

The data presented in this document involve GHG emissions associated with the raw materials and acquisition of materials; therefore, the limitations related to raw materials and acquisition for specific material types are provided in respective material type chapters. Other limitations are as follows:

- The recycling results are reported in terms of GHG emissions per short ton of material collected for recycling. Thus, the emission factors incorporate assumptions on loss of material through collection, sorting and remanufacturing. There is uncertainty in the loss rates: some materials recovery facilities and manufacturing processes may recover or use recycled materials more or less efficiently than as estimated here.
- Because the modeling approach assumes closed-loop recycling for most materials, it does not fully reflect the prevalence and diversity of open-loop recycling. Most of the materials in this analysis are recycled into a variety of manufactured products, not just into the original material. Resource limitations prevent an exhaustive analysis of all of the recycling possibilities for each of the materials analyzed.
- For the purpose of simplicity, EPA assumed that increased recycling does not change overall demand for products. In other words, it was assumed that each incremental short ton of recycled inputs would displace virgin inputs in the manufacturing sector. In reality, there may be

a relationship between recycling and demand for products with recycled content since these products may become cheaper as the supply of recycled materials increases.

## 2.4 REFERENCES

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### 3 ANAEROBIC DIGESTION

This chapter describes the development of anaerobic digestion emission factors for EPA's Waste Reduction Model (WARM). Included are estimates of the net greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from anaerobic digestion of yard trimmings, food waste, and mixed organics waste.

#### 3.1 A SUMMARY OF THE GHG IMPLICATIONS OF ANAEROBIC DIGESTION

During anaerobic digestion, degradable materials, such as yard trimmings and food waste, are digested in a reactor in the absence of oxygen to produce biogas that is between 50-70 percent methane (CH<sub>4</sub>). This biogas is then typically burned on-site for electricity generation.<sup>7</sup> WARM includes anaerobic digestion as a materials management option for yard trimmings, food waste, and mixed organics (i.e., yard trimmings plus food waste). Although there are many different categories of food waste, including food waste from residential sources, commercial sources, waste from specific types of commercial entities, vegetables, and meat, EPA has not located satisfactory data on how the characteristics of these different types of waste vary when managed at end of life. As a result, all food waste is treated as one material in the anaerobic digestion management practice in WARM. The same assumption was made for the landfilling, composting, and combustion pathways in WARM.

Anaerobic digestion is a biological process in which microorganisms break down organic material in the absence of oxygen. While breaking down this matter, the microorganisms release biogas and leave behind digested solids referred to as digestate. WARM's approach to anaerobic digestion assumes that the biogas is used for electricity generation and to heat the digester while the digestate is ultimately applied to agricultural lands.

There are different types of digesters including wet and dry digesters. Wet digesters involve the addition of water during the digestion process; the liquid resulting from digestion is recovered and returned to the reactor once the process is complete. Dry digesters do not require the addition of water. EPA developed separate estimates of emissions for wet anaerobic digesters and dry anaerobic digesters. Due to the high amount of preprocessing that would be required, EPA assumed that wet digester operators do not use yard trimmings as a feedstock. Therefore, dry digestion is the only digestion option for yard trimmings and mixed organics. EPA also modeled two digestate management scenarios: the direct application of digestate to land and the curing of digestate before land application. As modeled in WARM, anaerobic digestion results in carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions from transportation, preprocessing and digester operations, carbon storage (associated with application of digestate to agricultural soils), nitrogen and phosphorous fertilizer offsets, net electricity offsets, and where applicable, digestate curing. Emissions estimates also include fugitive emissions of CH<sub>4</sub> and nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O) produced during digestate decomposition.

#### 3.2 CALCULATING THE GHG IMPACTS OF ANAEROBIC DIGESTION

The stages of an anaerobic digestion operation that contributed to the WARM anaerobic digestion energy and emission factors include the following processes:

- Transport of materials
- Preprocessing and digester operations
- Biogas collection and utilization
- Curing and land application
- Fugitive CH<sub>4</sub> and N<sub>2</sub>O emissions

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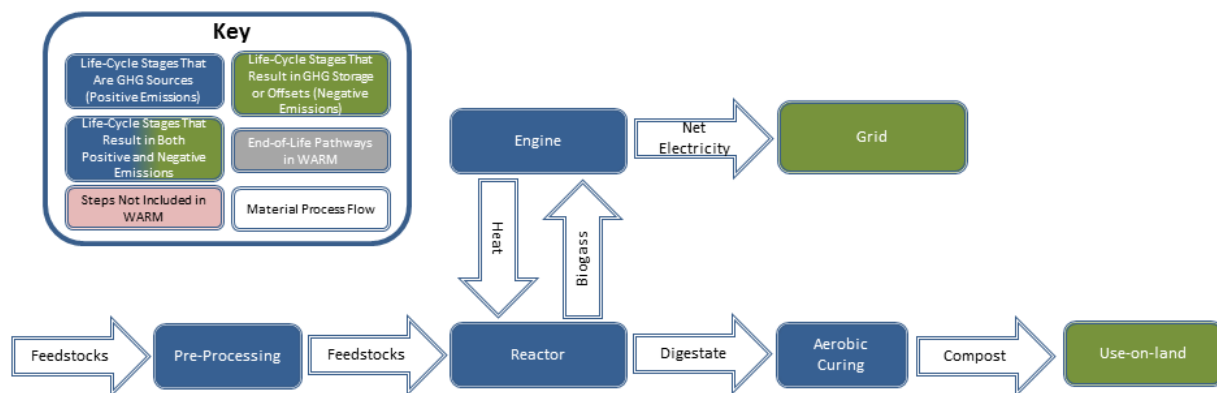
<sup>7</sup> The generated biogas can be used for other applications such as vehicle fuel or upgrading to pipeline-quality natural gas. These biogas applications are not modeled in WARM.

- Carbon storage
- Avoided fertilizer offsets
- Net electricity offsets

There are numerous configurations of anaerobic digestion facilities. WARM includes the emissions associated with both a continuous single-stage, wet, mesophilic digester and a single-stage, dry, mesophilic digester. Wet digestion is the most widely-used technology in practice (when including the co-digestion of food waste with wastewater sludge or manure). The modeled wet digester is assumed to process only food waste whereas the dry digester may accept food waste, yard trimmings and mixed organics. Dry digestion systems are projected to represent the majority of anaerobic digestion growth in the United States (The Environmental Research & Education Foundation, 2015). Both the wet and dry digesters modeled in WARM may utilize the biogas produced to heat the reactor and to generate electricity on-site. A majority of currently operational facilities beneficially use biogas (The Environmental Research & Education Foundation, 2015). EPA assumed that the generated electricity is used to power the anaerobic digestion facility and excess electricity is sold to the regional electrical grid. Depending on the system type, the digestate removed from the reactor is dewatered and can be aerobically cured. The resulting compost is land applied and assumed to store carbon and offset nitrogen and phosphorus fertilizer use.

Exhibit 3-1 below shows a flow diagram of the different processes within anaerobic digestion. Feedstock materials, such as food waste, are pre-processed. Pre-processing includes grinding, screening and mixing the feedstock before it is fed into the digester. The digester releases biogas which is combusted in an internal combustion engine to generate electricity and heat. The heat is captured and used to heat the reactor while the net electricity generated is exported to the electrical grid, offsetting grid electricity generation. The digestate is removed from the digester and, in the case of a wet digester, dewatered. The digestate is either aerobically cured before land application or directly applied to agricultural lands.

**Exhibit 3-1: Flow Diagram of Anaerobic Digestion as Modeled in WARM**



The process modeled within WARM results in biogenic CO<sub>2</sub> emissions associated with decomposition after the resulting compost is added to the soil. Because this CO<sub>2</sub> is biogenic in origin, however, it is not counted as a GHG in the *Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks* and is not included in this accounting of emissions and sinks.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> For more information on biogenic carbon emissions, see the text box, “CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions from Biogenic Sources” in the [WARM Background and Overview](#) chapter.

The following sections provide additional detail on the data sources and methods used to develop emissions factors. Section 3.2.1 describes the material properties required to model anaerobic digestion. Section 3.2.2 describes the transport of materials in terms of the fossil fuels (diesel) used in vehicles collecting and transporting waste to the anaerobic digestion facility and the post-consumer transportation. Section 3.2.3 discusses the inputs required for the preprocessing and operation of the anaerobic digester including fuel and electricity use, water requirements, and losses. Section 3.2.4 outlines the biogas collection process and the avoided emissions from the combustion of methane. Section 3.2.5 describes the curing and land application process. Section 3.2.6 describes the fugitive CH<sub>4</sub> and N<sub>2</sub>O emissions that occur during digestate curing and after land application. Section 3.2.7 describes the components of carbon storage. Section 3.2.8 discusses the avoided nitrogen and phosphorous fertilizer amounts and emissions from land application of digestate.

### 3.2.1 Calculating Material Properties

In modeling anaerobic digestion, EPA first determined the amount of carbon contained in degradable materials that will be anaerobically digested. Although a large body of research exists on CH<sub>4</sub> generation from mixed solid wastes, only a few investigators—most notably Dr. Morton Barlaz and colleagues at North Carolina State University—have measured the behavior of specific waste wood, paper, food waste and yard trimming components. The results of their experiments yield data on the inputs—specifically the initial carbon contents, CH<sub>4</sub> generation and carbon stored—that are required for calculating material-specific emission factors for WARM.

The anaerobic digestion process requires eight material properties for each organic feedstock. Net emission values are calculated for mixed yard trimmings and mixed organics based on the weighted average emission factors for the constituent materials (i.e., food waste, branches, grass, and leaves). Exhibit 3-2 shows the material properties based on the work of Dr. Barlaz and are consistent with the methodology used for landfilling in WARM, as described in the [Landfilling](#) Chapter.

**Exhibit 3-2: Material Properties by Material Type**

Material	Moisture Content (%)	Initial Carbon Content <sup>b</sup> (%)	Initial Nitrogen Content <sup>a</sup> (%)	Initial Phosphorus Content <sup>a</sup> (%)	Volatile Solids Content <sup>a</sup> (%)	Methane Potential (m <sup>3</sup> /dry metric ton)	Percent of Final Methane Yield Reached <sup>e</sup> (%)	Volatile Solids Destruction <sup>f</sup> (%)
Food Waste	72.2%	49.5%	3.8%	0.51%	95.6%	369.0 <sup>c</sup>	90.0%	75.0%
Branches	15.9%	49.4%	0.8%	0.20%	90.6%	106.0 <sup>d</sup>	50.0%	47.5%
Grass	82.0%	44.9%	3.4%	0.20%	86.4%	194.8	90.0%	75.0%
Leaves	32.2%	45.5%	0.9%	0.20%	90.2%	65.3 <sup>d</sup>	50.0%	47.5%

<sup>a</sup> Developed from Riber et al. (2009).

<sup>b</sup> Initial carbon content from Barlaz (1998).

<sup>c</sup> Mean of literature values reviewed; Hodge, K. L., Levis, J. W., DeCarolis, J. F., & Barlaz, M. A. (2016). Systematic evaluation of industrial, commercial, and institutional food waste management strategies in the United States. *Environmental Science & Technology*, 50(16), 8444-8452.

<sup>d</sup> Methane yield calculated from C-loss reported by Barlaz (1998).

<sup>e</sup> Varies by process, retention time, and material decay rate. Møller et al. (2009) used 70% for mixed organics, which was increased to 90% for food waste and grass and reduced to 50% for branches and leaves.

<sup>f</sup> Used average for mesophilic reactors reported by EBMUD (2008) for food waste and grass and used average for municipal wastewater solids for branches and leaves due to their higher lignin content.

The methane yield of food waste is the most critical input value, and a review of recent literature shows that it can range from approximately 181 to 544 m<sup>3</sup> CH<sub>4</sub>/dry ton. The mean of the previous studies is 334 m<sup>3</sup> CH<sub>4</sub>/ ton. The current version of WARM uses a factor of 369 m<sup>3</sup> CH<sub>4</sub>/dry ton,

which is within one standard deviation of the mean. This higher value was selected for consistency with the current WARM landfill model.

### 3.2.2 Transport of Materials

WARM accounts for the GHG emissions resulting from fossil fuels used in vehicles collecting and transporting waste to the anaerobic digestion facility. Exhibit 3-3 shows the diesel used for transporting the feedstock and solids to the anaerobic digester and the post-consumer transportation. To calculate the emissions, WARM relies on assumptions NREL's US Life Cycle Inventory Database (USLCI) (NREL, 2015). The NREL emission factor assumes a diesel, short-haul truck.

**Exhibit 3-3: Diesel Use by Process and by Material Type for Dry Digestion**

Material	Transportation and Spreading (Million Btu)	Post-Consumer Transportation (Million Btu)	Total Energy Required for Dry Anaerobic Digestion (Million Btu)	Total CO <sub>2</sub> Emissions from Dry Anaerobic Digestion (MTCO <sub>2</sub> E)
Food Waste	0.26	0.04	0.30	0.02
Yard Trimmings	0.29	0.04	0.33	0.02
Grass	0.26	0.04	0.30	0.02
Leaves	0.31	0.04	0.35	0.02
Branches	0.32	0.04	0.36	0.02
Mixed Organics	0.27	0.04	0.31	0.02

### 3.2.3 Preprocessing and Digester Operations

WARM models the electricity and diesel consumed during preprocessing and digester operation for both wet and dry digestion based on literature values. Preprocessing includes grinding, screening and mixing the feedstock before they are fed into the reactor. For the electricity used in operations, EPA assumed the upper literature limit for the wet digestion system, as additional electricity is required for pumping and mixing within the system (Moller et al., 2009). The lower literature limit was chosen for the dry digestion system (Moller et al., 2009). Dry digestion requires more diesel for its operations as it involves the additional use of front-end loaders to move materials. The reactor moisture content of wet digestion systems is assumed to be higher than dry digestion systems. In the wet digestion system, the digestate is dewatered and some liquids are recovered and returned to the reactor, with the remainder being treated in a wastewater treatment plant (WWTP). For dry systems, the digestate is simply removed without dewatering. Electricity is consumed during the dewatering process. Additional operation assumptions are shown below in Exhibit 3-4.

**Exhibit 3-4: Preprocessing and Reactor Operations Inputs and Assumptions for Wet and Dry Anaerobic Digestion**

Facility Operation Inputs	Units	Wet Digestion Assumptions	Dry Digestion Assumptions	Source
Percent methane loss to leaks	%	2	2	WERF, 2012 Sanscartier et al. (2012) reports (2-5%)
House electricity demand	kWh/ton	45.4	18.1	Boldrin et al. (2011) (48.9 kWh/Mg) Møller et al. (2009) (20-50 kWh/Mg) Sanscartier et al. (2012) (47-67 kWh/Mg for Dufferin facility)
Dewatering electricity use	kWh/ton	68	0	Niuet al. (2013)
House diesel fuel use	L/ton	0.91	5.89	Boldrin et al. (2011) (0.9 L/Mg) Møller et al. (2009) (1.6 L/Mg) Sanscartier et al. (2012) (0.3 L/Mg for Dufferin facility) WERF (2012) (6.5 L/Mg)

Reactor moisture content	% wet weight	95	70	Hansen et al. (2006)
Moisture content after dewatering	% wet weight	76	NA	Metcalf and Eddy (2003)
Percent dry mass Nitrogen loss during AD	%	8	8	Developed from Hansen et al. (2006) based on initial nitrogen content
Percent dry mass Phosphorus loss during AD	%	0	0	Assumed

### 3.2.4 Biogas Collection and Avoided Emissions

The methane biogas produced during anaerobic digestion is collected and can be combusted to produce heat and electricity. The recovery of heat and electricity from the combusted biogas offsets the combustion of other fossil fuel inputs. WARM models the recovery of biogas for electricity generation and assumes that this electricity offsets non-baseload electricity generation in the power sector. Electricity generation from combustion of biogas is assumed to be unavailable for 15 percent of operation time and the process is assumed to be 29 percent efficient (EPA, 2013) These values are consistent with those used for landfill gas combustion in WARM, as described in the [Landfilling](#) Chapter.

WARM estimates the amount of methane that is collected by gas collection equipment. Exhibit 3-5 and Exhibit 3-6 show the mass of methane generated, leaked, flared, and combusted for energy by material type for wet and dry digestion. The anaerobic digestion of food waste results in almost twice as much electricity generation compared to yard trimmings and mixed organics due to its higher methane yield. For all feedstocks, the excess heat captured from the engine is more than four times what is needed to heat the digester.

**Exhibit 3-5: Methane Generation, Treatment, and Use by Material Type for Dry Digestion**

Material	Mass of Methane Generated (kg/ton)	Mass of Methane Leaked (kg/ton)	Mass of Methane Flared (kg/ton)	Mass of Methane Combusted for Energy (kg/ton)	Energy from Combusted Methane (MMBtu/ton)	Electricity Generation (kWh/ton)	Net Electricity to the Grid (kWh/ton)
Food Waste	60.0	1.20	8.81	49.9	2.37	201.2	182.8
Yard Trimmings	21.1	0.42	3.10	17.6	0.83	70.7	51.9
Grass	20.5	0.41	3.01	17.1	0.81	68.8	50.4
Leaves	14.4	0.29	2.11	12.0	0.57	48.2	29.1
Branches	28.9	0.58	4.26	24.1	1.14	97.1	77.7
Mixed Organics	41.8	0.84	6.15	34.8	1.65	140.3	121.8

**Exhibit 3-6: Methane Generation, Treatment, and Use by Material Type for Wet Digestion**

Material	Mass of Methane Generated (kg/ton)	Mass of Methane Leaked (kg/ton)	Mass of Methane Flared (kg/ton)	Mass of Methane Combusted for Energy (kg/ton)	Energy from Combusted Methane (MMBtu/ton)	Electricity Generation (kWh/ton)	Energy Available to Heat Digester (MMBtu/ton)	Net Electricity to the Grid (kWh/ton)	Energy Required to Heat Reactor (MMBtu/ton)
Food Waste	59.96	1.20	8.81	49.9	2.37	201.2	1.26	154.54	0.14

WARM applies non-baseload electricity emission rates to calculate the emissions offset from gas energy recovery because the model assumes that incremental increases in energy recovery will affect non-baseload power plants (i.e., power plants that are “demand-following” and adjust to marginal changes in the supply and demand of electricity). EPA calculated non-baseload emission rates as the average emissions rate from power plants that combust fuel and have capacity factors less than 0.8

(EPA, 2015a). The methodology used for anaerobic digestion is consistent with landfilling in WARM, as described in the [Landfilling](#) chapter.

The net electricity exported to the grid is the difference between the electricity generated from biogas combustion and the electricity used in the anaerobic digestion process and, if modeled by the user, digestate curing. The majority of the electricity use is due to material pre-processing and mixing. Food waste uses less electricity for dewatering and screening because its higher moisture content results in less solid digestate produced. Exhibit 3-7 illustrates the net electricity exported to the grid by material type.

**Exhibit 3-7: Electricity Exported by Material Type for Dry Digestion and Digestate Curing**

Material	Net Electricity to Grid (kWh/ton)	Net Greenhouse Gas Offset <sup>a</sup> (MTCO <sub>2</sub> e/ton)
Food Waste	182.80	0.14
Yard Trimmings	51.91	0.04
Grass	50.45	0.04
Leaves	29.05	0.02
Branches	77.70	0.06
Mixed Organics	121.76	0.09

<sup>a</sup> Based on national average grid mix.

### 3.2.5 Curing and Land Application

For both wet and dry anaerobic digestion systems, WARM estimates the emissions associated with two scenarios for digestate beneficial use: curing the digestate and applying the resulting compost to agricultural lands, or directly applying digestate to agricultural lands without curing.

In the case in which the digestate is cured, the solids are aerobically cured in turned windrows. The resulting compost is then screened, transported to agriculture lands, and used in place of a portion of the conventional nitrogen and phosphorus fertilizer that would be needed for the same agricultural lands. EPA assumed that there are CH<sub>4</sub> and N<sub>2</sub>O emissions released during the curing process. Less N<sub>2</sub>O is emitted from the cured compost during land application than from compost that was directly applied due in part to the N<sub>2</sub>O released during the curing process. Cured digestate also has a lower mass of carbon stored after 100 years compared to digestate directly applied to agricultural lands. Exhibit 3-8 outlines the digestate curing input values and assumptions used to develop curing GHG emissions within WARM. These inputs are used to calculate the diesel used during curing for mixing and windrow turning and electricity use for screening. Section 3.2.7 and Section 3.2.8 further elaborate on the impact of curing on fugitive emissions and carbon storage calculations.

**Exhibit 3-8: Digestate Curing Inputs and Assumptions for Wet and Dry Digestion**

Digestate Curing Parameters	Units	Value	Source
Curing fuel use (mixing windrow turning)	L/ton	1	Boldrin et al. (2009) Assumed 1/3 of 3L used for curing.
Nitrogen loss during curing	%	38.5	Average from Beck-Friis et al. (2000)
Carbon loss during curing	%	58	Boldrin et al. (2009) Average for open biowaste systems
Percent N loss as N <sub>2</sub> O	%	1	Boldrin et al. (2009) Average for open biowaste systems
Percent C loss as CH <sub>4</sub>	%	1.3	Boldrin et al. (2009) Average for open biowaste systems
Screen electricity use	kWh/ton	0.882	Komilis and Ham (2004)
Mass volatile solids loss per mol C loss	g/mol C loss	12	Haug (1993)
Finished compost moisture content	%	40	Haug (1993)



### 3.2.6 Fugitive Emissions of CH<sub>4</sub> and N<sub>2</sub>O During Curing and After Land Application

In addition to the emissions from curing processes, WARM accounts for the fugitive CH<sub>4</sub> and N<sub>2</sub>O emissions that occur during the curing process and after land application. These emissions are dependent on whether the digestate is cured before land application. Exhibit 3-9 summarizes the CH<sub>4</sub> and N<sub>2</sub>O emissions by material type. Food waste has greater N<sub>2</sub>O emissions and nitrogen fertilizer offsets because it contains more initial nitrogen.

**Exhibit 3-9: Methane and Nitrous Oxide Emissions During Curing and After Land Application for Wet and Dry Digestion**

Material	Methane Emitted During Curing (kg CH <sub>4</sub> /ton)	N <sub>2</sub> O Emitted During Curing (kg N <sub>2</sub> O/ton)	N <sub>2</sub> O Emitted After Land Application when Cured (kg N <sub>2</sub> O/ton)	N <sub>2</sub> O Emitted After Land Application when not Cured (kg N <sub>2</sub> O/ton)
Food Waste	0.26	0.11	0.26	0.42
Yard Trimmings	1.28	0.06	0.15	0.25
Grass	0.32	0.06	0.15	0.24
Leaves	1.95	0.06	0.15	0.24
Branches	2.51	0.07	0.16	0.26
Mixed Organics	0.74	0.09	0.21	0.34

### 3.2.7 Carbon Storage

Similar to carbon from compost applied to agricultural lands, EPA assumed that carbon from digestate applied to agricultural lands remains stored in the soil through two main mechanisms: direct storage of carbon in depleted soils and carbon stored in non-reactive humus compounds. WARM calculates the carbon storage impact of each carbon storage path separately and then sums them to estimate the carbon storage factor associated with each short ton of organics composted. For more information on carbon storage calculations, see section 2.4 in the [Composting](#) chapter, which includes information on the Century model framework and simulations. EPA used the Century model to calculate soil carbon storage by simulating soil organic matter pools. Exhibit 3-10 presents the soil carbon storage by material type. The increased solids content of mixed organics causes increased carbon in the compost when compared to compost from just food waste, and thus increased soil carbon storage credits.

**Exhibit 3-10: Soil Carbon Storage by Material Type**

Material	Soil Carbon Storage (kg C/ton)
Food Waste	8.96
Yard Trimmings	43.37
Grass	10.92
Leaves	66.18
Branches	85.46
Mixed Organics	25.01

### 3.2.8 Avoided Fertilizer Offsets

EPA assumed that digestate applied to agricultural land allows for some synthetic fertilizer use to be avoided. Food waste is the primary feedstock for anaerobic digestion, and contains significant amounts of nitrogen and phosphorus. Based on a review of literature, EPA calculated a nitrogen and phosphorus fertilizer offset for anaerobically digested materials (Beck-Friis, Pell, Sonesson, Jonsson, & Kirchmann, 2000). The literature values used for mineral nutrient equivalence and the emissions intensity of nitrogen and phosphorous fertilizer use and application are shown in Exhibit 3-11.

**Exhibit 3-11: Literature Values for Calculating Avoided Fertilizer Offsets**

Use on Land Parameters	Units	Value	Source
Mineral Nutrient Equivalent for Nitrogen	kg N offset/kg N applied	0.4	Møller et al. (2009)
Mineral Nutrient Equivalent for Phosphorus	kg N offset/kg P applied	1.0	Møller et al. (2009)
GHG intensity of N fertilizer use and application	kg CO <sub>2</sub> e/kg N	8.9	Boldrin et al. (2009)
GHG intensity of P fertilizer use and application	kg CO <sub>2</sub> e/kg N	1.8	Boldrin et al. (2009)

Exhibit 3-12 presents the nitrogen and phosphorous fertilizer offset by material type. Food waste has greater nitrogen fertilizer offsets than yard trimmings and mixed organics as it initially contains more nitrogen.

**Exhibit 3-12: Nitrogen and Phosphorous Fertilizer Offset by Material Type**

Material	Nitrogen Fertilizer Offset (kg N/ton)	Phosphorous Fertilizer Offset (kg P/ton)	Nitrogen Fertilizer Offset (MTCO <sub>2</sub> e/ton)	Phosphorous Fertilizer Offset (MTCO <sub>2</sub> e/ton)
Food Waste	1.084	1.286	0.01	0.00
Yard Trimmings	0.643	0.844	0.01	0.00
Grass	0.628	0.323	0.01	0.00
Leaves	0.626	1.218	0.01	0.00
Branches	0.691	1.511	0.01	0.00
Mixed Organics	0.873	1.074	0.01	0.00

**3.2.9 WARM Anaerobic Digestion Results**

The net greenhouse gas emissions resulting from anaerobic digestion are calculated by summing the emissions from the diesel for transportation and land application, fuel and electricity required for operation, biogas collection and combustion of methane, curing and land application, fugitive emissions, carbon storage, avoided fertilizer offsets and avoided electricity offsets. In WARM, the emissions from anaerobic digestion are dependent on the user selection of one of two digestion scenarios (i.e., “Wet Anaerobic Digestion,” and “Dry Anaerobic Digestion”) and one of two curing scenarios (i.e., “Cured Digestate,” and “Direct Application”). Exhibit 3-13 shows the GHG emissions from each sub-process for the dry digestion of food waste and mixed organics with digestate curing. Exhibit 3-14 shows the GHG emissions from dry digestion with direct land application.

Exhibit 3-15 shows the GHG emissions from wet digestion with digestate curing. Exhibit 3-16 shows the GHG emissions from wet digestion with direct land application.

**Exhibit 3-13: Components of the Dry Anaerobic Digestion Net Emission Factor by Material Type with Digestate Curing (MTCO<sub>2</sub>E/Short Ton)**

Material	Process Energy	Avoided Utility Emissions	Avoided Fertilizer Application	Soil Carbon Storage	Process Non-Energy	Transportation Energy	Net Emissions (Post-Consumer)
Food Waste <sup>a b</sup>	0.02	(0.14)	(0.01)	(0.03)	0.12	0.00	(0.04)
Food Waste (meat only)	0.02	(0.14)	(0.01)	(0.03)	0.12	0.00	(0.04)
Food Waste (non-meat)	0.02	(0.14)	(0.01)	(0.03)	0.12	0.00	(0.04)
Beef	0.02	(0.14)	(0.01)	(0.03)	0.12	0.00	(0.04)
Poultry	0.02	(0.14)	(0.01)	(0.03)	0.12	0.00	(0.04)
Grains	0.02	(0.14)	(0.01)	(0.03)	0.12	0.00	(0.04)
Bread	0.02	(0.14)	(0.01)	(0.03)	0.12	0.00	(0.04)
Fruits and Vegetables	0.02	(0.14)	(0.01)	(0.03)	0.12	0.00	(0.04)
Dairy Products	0.02	(0.14)	(0.01)	(0.03)	0.12	0.00	(0.04)
Yard Trimmings	0.02	(0.04)	(0.01)	(0.16)	0.09	0.00	(0.09)
Grass	0.02	(0.04)	(0.01)	(0.04)	0.07	0.00	0.00
Leaves	0.02	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.24)	0.10	0.00	(0.14)
Branches	0.02	(0.06)	(0.01)	(0.31)	0.13	0.00	(0.22)
Mixed Organics <sup>c</sup>	0.02	(0.09)	(0.01)	(0.09)	0.11	0.00	(0.06)

<sup>a</sup> Food waste material properties represent a weighted average of vegetable food waste and non-vegetable food waste.

<sup>b</sup> Although there are many different categories of food waste, including food waste from residential sources, commercial sources, waste from specific types of commercial entities, vegetables, and meat, EPA has not located satisfactory data on how the characteristics of these different types of waste vary when managed at end of life. As a result, all food waste is treated as one material in the anaerobic digestion management practice in WARM.

<sup>c</sup> Mixed organics material properties represent a weighted average of branches, grass, leaves, vegetable food waste, and non-vegetable food waste.

**Exhibit 3-14: Components of the Dry Anaerobic Digestion Net Emission Factor by Material Type with Direct Land Application (MTCO<sub>2</sub>E/Short Ton)**

Material	Process Energy	Avoided Utility Emissions	Avoided Fertilizer Application	Soil Carbon Storage	Process Non-Energy	Transportation Energy	Net Emissions (Post-Consumer)
Food Waste <sup>a b</sup>	0.02	(0.14)	(0.02)	(0.08)	0.12	0.00	(0.10)
Food Waste (meat only)	0.02	(0.14)	(0.02)	(0.08)	0.12	0.00	(0.10)
Food Waste (non-meat)	0.02	(0.14)	(0.02)	(0.08)	0.12	0.00	(0.10)
Beef	0.02	(0.14)	(0.02)	(0.08)	0.12	0.00	(0.10)
Poultry	0.02	(0.14)	(0.02)	(0.08)	0.12	0.00	(0.10)
Grains	0.02	(0.14)	(0.02)	(0.08)	0.12	0.00	(0.10)
Bread	0.02	(0.14)	(0.02)	(0.08)	0.12	0.00	(0.10)
Fruits and Vegetables	0.02	(0.14)	(0.02)	(0.08)	0.12	0.00	(0.10)
Dairy Products	0.02	(0.14)	(0.02)	(0.08)	0.12	0.00	(0.10)
Yard Trimmings	0.02	(0.04)	(0.01)	(0.38)	0.06	0.00	(0.35)
Grass	0.02	(0.04)	(0.01)	(0.10)	0.06	0.00	(0.06)
Leaves	0.02	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.58)	0.06	0.00	(0.53)
Branches	0.02	(0.06)	(0.01)	(0.75)	0.07	0.00	(0.73)
Mixed Organics <sup>c</sup>	0.02	(0.09)	(0.01)	(0.22)	0.09	0.00	(0.21)

<sup>a</sup> Food waste material properties represent a weighted average of vegetable food waste and non-vegetable food waste.

<sup>b</sup> Although there are many different categories of food waste, including food waste from residential sources, commercial sources, waste from specific types of commercial entities, vegetables, and meat, EPA has not located satisfactory data on how the characteristics of these different types of waste vary when managed at end of life. As a result, all food waste is treated as one material in the anaerobic digestion management practice in WARM.

<sup>c</sup> Mixed organics material properties represent a weighted average of branches, grass, leaves, vegetable food waste, and non-vegetable food waste.

**Exhibit 3-15: Components of the Wet Anaerobic Digestion Net Emission Factor by Material Type with Digestate Curing (MTCO<sub>2</sub>E/Short Ton)**

Material	Process Energy	Avoided Utility Emissions	Avoided Fertilizer Application	Soil Carbon Storage	Process Non-Energy	Transportation Energy	Net Emissions (Post-Consumer)
Food Waste <sup>a b</sup>	0.01	(0.12)	(0.02)	(0.03)	0.10	0.00	(0.06)
Food Waste (meat only)	0.01	(0.12)	(0.02)	(0.03)	0.10	0.00	(0.06)
Food Waste (non-meat)	0.01	(0.12)	(0.02)	(0.03)	0.10	0.00	(0.06)
Beef	0.01	(0.12)	(0.02)	(0.03)	0.10	0.00	(0.06)
Poultry	0.01	(0.12)	(0.02)	(0.03)	0.10	0.00	(0.06)
Grains	0.01	(0.12)	(0.02)	(0.03)	0.10	0.00	(0.06)
Bread	0.01	(0.12)	(0.02)	(0.03)	0.10	0.00	(0.06)
Fruits and Vegetables	0.01	(0.12)	(0.02)	(0.03)	0.10	0.00	(0.06)
Dairy Products	0.01	(0.12)	(0.02)	(0.03)	0.10	0.00	(0.06)
Yard Trimmings	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Grass	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Leaves	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Branches	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Mixed Organics <sup>c</sup>	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

<sup>a</sup> Food waste material properties represent a weighted average of vegetable food waste and non-vegetable food waste.

<sup>b</sup> Although there are many different categories of food waste, including food waste from residential sources, commercial sources, waste from specific types of commercial entities, vegetables, and meat, EPA has not located satisfactory data on how the characteristics of these different types of waste vary when managed at end of life. As a result, all food waste is treated as one material in the anaerobic digestion management practice in WARM.

<sup>c</sup> Mixed organics material properties represent a weighted average of branches, grass, leaves, vegetable food waste, and non-vegetable food waste.

NA = Not applicable

**Exhibit 3-16: Components of the Wet Anaerobic Digestion Net Emission Factor by Material Type with Direct Land Application (MTCO<sub>2</sub>E/Short Ton)**

Material	Process Energy	Avoided Utility Emissions	Avoided Fertilizer Application	Soil Carbon Storage	Process Non-Energy	Transportation Energy	Net Emissions (Post-Consumer)
Food Waste <sup>a b</sup>	0.01	(0.12)	(0.03)	(0.08)	0.08	0.00	(0.14)
Food Waste (meat only)	0.01	(0.12)	(0.03)	(0.08)	0.08	0.00	(0.14)
Food Waste (non-meat)	0.01	(0.12)	(0.03)	(0.08)	0.08	0.00	(0.14)
Beef	0.01	(0.12)	(0.03)	(0.08)	0.08	0.00	(0.14)
Poultry	0.01	(0.12)	(0.03)	(0.08)	0.08	0.00	(0.14)
Grains	0.01	(0.12)	(0.03)	(0.08)	0.08	0.00	(0.14)
Bread	0.01	(0.12)	(0.03)	(0.08)	0.08	0.00	(0.14)
Fruits and Vegetables	0.01	(0.12)	(0.03)	(0.08)	0.08	0.00	(0.14)
Dairy Products	0.01	(0.12)	(0.03)	(0.08)	0.08	0.00	(0.14)
Yard Trimmings	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Grass	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Leaves	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Branches	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Mixed Organics <sup>c</sup>	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

<sup>a</sup> Food waste material properties represent a weighted average of vegetable food waste and non-vegetable food waste.

<sup>b</sup> Although there are many different categories of food waste, including food waste from residential sources, commercial sources, waste from specific types of commercial entities, vegetables, and meat, EPA has not located satisfactory data on how the characteristics of these different types of waste vary when managed at end of life. As a result, all food waste is treated as one material in the anaerobic digestion management practice in WARM.

<sup>c</sup> Mixed organics material properties represent a weighted average of branches, grass, leaves, vegetable food waste, and non-vegetable food waste.

NA = Not applicable

### 3.3 LIMITATIONS

Because of data and resource constraints, this chapter does not explore the full range of conditions, technologies, and practices for anaerobic digestion and how this range could affect the results of this analysis. Instead, EPA has attempted to provide an analysis of GHG emissions and sinks associated with anaerobic digestion of organics under a limited set of scenarios. In addition, the analysis was limited by the scope of WARM, which is intended to present life-cycle GHG emissions of waste management practices for selected material types, including food waste and yard trimmings.

This section compiles the limitations of the anaerobic digestion analysis described in this chapter.

- This analysis did not consider the differences in anaerobic digestion emissions resulting from digesting different food waste types. EPA may consider the need for additional research into developing food type-specific anaerobic digestion factors for WARM.
- WARM assumes that the biogas generated during anaerobic digestion is used in an internal combustion engine to generate electricity. This electricity then offsets grid electricity. Throughout EPA's review of literature and stakeholder engagement, multiple other uses have been identified for the biogas that have not been addressed here. These uses include upgrading the gas to pipeline quality and converting it to either compressed natural gas or liquid natural gas.
- WARM assumes that the digestate generated during anaerobically digesting organic waste is applied to agricultural land, either after curing or without further processing. EPA's review of literature and stakeholder engagement identified other uses for digestate that have not been addressed within WARM. These uses include incinerating it for energy recovery and pelletizing it for sale as a fertilizer substitute.
- The net GHG emissions from anaerobically digesting food waste are quite sensitive to food waste methane yield assumptions. In discussions with stakeholders and in EPA's review of literature, it was indicated that there was little evidence that different anaerobic digestion reactor configurations have significantly different methane yields. Therefore, EPA believes that the model presented in this chapter should provide reasonable estimates of the GHG emissions from a wide range of anaerobic digestion configurations.
- This analysis calculates the GHG impacts of the anaerobic digestion of individual substrates as if they were digested by themselves. In practice, food waste may be co-digested with manure of wastewater treatment biosolids. It is assumed that the food waste behaves the same in dedicated and in co-digestion facilities such that the analysis presented here is applicable across many anaerobic digestion scenarios.
- As identified in the [Composting Chapter](#), this analysis does not consider all soil conversation and management pathways and the impact of those practices on carbon storage. Data and resource restraints prevented EPA from using Century to evaluate the variation in carbon storage impacts for a wide range of compost feedstocks (e.g., yard trimmings mixed with food waste, food waste alone). EPA acknowledges that the modeling performed to determine the humus formation for yard trimmings and food discards attempts to provide an analysis of GHG emissions and sinks that reflect the set of scenarios available. This methodology and its limitations are further explained in the [Composting Chapter](#).

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## 4 COMPOSTING

This guidance document describes the development of composting emission factors for EPA's Waste Reduction Model (WARM). Included are estimates of the net greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from composting of yard trimmings and food waste, as well as mixed organics and polylactide (PLA) biopolymer resin.<sup>9</sup>

### 4.1 A SUMMARY OF THE GHG IMPLICATIONS OF COMPOSTING

During composting, microbial decomposition aerobically transforms organic substrates into a stable, humus-like material (Brown and Subler, 2007). Although small-scale composting, such as backyard composting, occurs across the United States, WARM models composting only in central composting facilities with windrow piles because data for small-scale composting or other large-scale operations are insufficient.<sup>10</sup> WARM includes composting as a materials management option for yard trimmings, food waste, PLA, and mixed organics.

As modeled in WARM, composting results in some carbon storage (associated with application of compost to agricultural soils), carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions from transportation and mechanical turning of the compost piles, in addition to fugitive emissions of methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) and nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O) produced during decomposition. To estimate the carbon storage from compost application, EPA selected point estimates from the range of emission factors covering various compost application rates and time periods. EPA chose the point estimates based on a typical compost application rate of 20 short tons of compost per acre, averaged over four soil-crop scenarios.<sup>11</sup> EPA selected the carbon storage values for the year 2010 to maintain consistency with the forest carbon storage estimates discussed in the Forest Carbon Storage chapter.<sup>12</sup>

### 4.2 CALCULATING THE GHG IMPACTS OF COMPOSTING

The stages of a composting operation with the potential to affect GHG flux include the following processes:

- Collecting and transporting the organic materials to the central composting site.
- Mechanical turning of the compost pile.
- Non-CO<sub>2</sub> GHG emissions during composting (primarily CH<sub>4</sub> and N<sub>2</sub>O).
- Avoided fertilizer offset from direct application of compost.
- Storage of carbon after compost application to soils.

Composting also results in biogenic CO<sub>2</sub> emissions associated with decomposition, both during the composting process and after the compost is added to the soil. Because this CO<sub>2</sub> is biogenic in origin,

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<sup>9</sup> Composting is not included as a material management pathway for paper because of insufficient information on the GHG implications of composting paper products.

<sup>10</sup> Windrows are a widely used method for composting yard trimmings and municipal solid waste, and they are considered to be the most cost-effective composting technology (EPA, 1994; Coker, 2006).

<sup>11</sup> EPA ran the composting simulation on two sites included in CENTURY: an eastern Colorado site with clay loam soil and a southwestern Iowa site with silty clay loam soil. EPA simulated two harvest regimes on each site, one where corn is harvested for silage and 95 percent of the above-ground biomass is removed and the other one where corn is harvested for grain and the stover is left behind to decompose on the field.

<sup>12</sup> For consistency with the paper recycling/source reduction analysis of forest carbon storage, EPA analyzed the GHG implications of composting at the year 2010. EPA chose 2010 in the paper recycling/source reduction and forest carbon analyses because it represented a delay of 5 to 15 years from the onset of the simulated period of incremental recycling.



however, it is not counted as a GHG in the *Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks* and is not included in this accounting of emissions and sinks.<sup>13</sup>

**Exhibit 4-1: Components of the Composting Net Emission Factor for Food Waste, Yard Trimmings, and Mixed Organics**

Material Type	Composting of Post-Consumer Material				
	Transportation and Turning of Compost	Fugitive Emissions	Fertilizer Offset	Soil Carbon Storage	Net Emissions (Post-Consumer)
PLA	0.03	0.10	(0.02)	(0.24)	(0.13)
Food Waste	0.03	0.08	(0.03)	(0.24)	(0.15)
Dairy Products	0.03	0.08	(0.03)	(0.24)	(0.15)
Grains	0.03	0.08	(0.03)	(0.24)	(0.15)
Bread	0.03	0.08	(0.03)	(0.24)	(0.15)
Fruits and Vegetables	0.03	0.08	(0.03)	(0.24)	(0.15)
Beef	0.03	0.08	(0.03)	(0.24)	(0.15)
Poultry	0.03	0.08	(0.03)	(0.24)	(0.15)
Food Waste (meat only)	0.03	0.08	(0.03)	(0.24)	(0.15)
Food Waste (non-meat)	0.03	0.08	(0.03)	(0.24)	(0.15)
Yard Trimmings	0.02	0.12	-	(0.24)	(0.11)
Grass	0.02	0.12	-	(0.24)	(0.11)
Leaves	0.02	0.12	-	(0.24)	(0.11)
Branches	0.02	0.12	-	(0.24)	(0.11)
Mixed Organics	0.03	0.10	(0.02)	(0.24)	(0.13)

– = Zero emissions.

Note that totals may not add due to rounding. Negative values denote GHG emission reductions or carbon storage.

Exhibit 4-1 shows the four components of the net emission factor for food waste, yard waste, PLA, and mixed organics. Because of resource and model resolution constraints, the two approaches EPA used in WARM to calculate carbon storage from compost application model only finished compost and do not distinguish between compost feedstocks; therefore, the emission factors for each organic's input are the same. The following sections provide further detail on the sources and methods used to develop these emission factors. Section 4.2.1 describes how WARM accounts for GHG emissions during transportation of composting materials and the physical turning of the compost. Section 4.2.2 describes the estimates of fugitive emissions of CH<sub>4</sub> and N<sub>2</sub>O for composting within WARM. Section 4.2.3 describes the avoided fertilizer offset from direct application of compost to soil. Section 4.2.4 details the methodology for calculating the carbon storage resulting from compost application in soils, and Sections 4.2.5 and 4.2.6 describe in greater detail the components of carbon storage.

#### 4.2.1 CO<sub>2</sub> from Transportation of Materials and Turning of Compost

WARM includes emissions associated with transporting and processing of the compost in aerated windrow piles. Transportation energy emissions occur when fossil fuels are combusted to collect and transport yard waste and food waste to the composting facility and then to operate composting equipment that turns the compost.<sup>14</sup> To calculate the emissions for yard waste materials, WARM relies on assumptions from FAL (1994) for the equipment emissions and NREL's US Life Cycle Inventory Database (USLCI) (NREL, 2015). The NREL emission factor assumes a diesel, short-haul truck. To calculate emissions for food waste material categories, WARM relies on assumptions from Oregon

<sup>13</sup> For more information on biogenic carbon emissions, see the text box, "CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions from Biogenic Sources" in the WARM [Background and Overview](#) chapter.

<sup>14</sup> EPA did not count transportation emissions from delivery of finished compost from the composting facility to its final destination.

DEQ (2014) for the equipment emissions and NREL's USLCI (NREL, 2015). Mixed organics and PLA are considered a representative blend of compostable waste, and use a weighted average of the yard and food waste transportation and turning emission factors based on the assumed composition of mixed organic waste.<sup>15</sup> Exhibit 4-2 provides the transportation emission factor calculation.

#### Exhibit 4-2: Emissions Associated with Transporting and Turning Compost

Material Type	Diesel Fuel Required to Collect and Transport One Short Ton (Million Btu) <sup>a</sup>	Electricity Required to Turn the Compost Piles (Million Btu)	Total Energy Required for Transporting and Turning Compost (Million Btu)	Total CO <sub>2</sub> Emissions from Transporting and Turning Compost (MTCO <sub>2</sub> E)
Yard Waste	0.04	0.22 <sup>b</sup>	0.26	0.02
Food Waste	0.04	0.69 <sup>c</sup>	0.73	0.03
PLA	0.04	0.47	0.51	0.03
Mixed Organics	0.04	0.47	0.51	0.03

<sup>a</sup> Based on estimates from NREL's USLCI Database.

<sup>b</sup> Based on estimates in Table I-17 in FAL, 1994, p.132.

<sup>c</sup> Based on estimates in Table 10 in Oregon DEQ, 2014, p.42.

## 4.2.2 Fugitive Emissions of CH<sub>4</sub> and N<sub>2</sub>O During Composting

### 4.2.2.1 Background on Fugitive Emissions from Composting

During the composting process, microbial activity decomposes waste into a variety of compounds, some of which are emitted from the compost pile as gases. The amount and type of end products formed during these reactions depends on many factors, including the original nutrient balance and composition of the waste, the temperature and moisture conditions of the compost, and the amount of oxygen present in the pile. These processes result in the generation of small amounts of CH<sub>4</sub> and N<sub>2</sub>O gases, which contribute to the net GHG emissions associated with the composting pathway.

The scientific literature suggests that there is a wide range of emissions for fugitive gases generated during composting. Local factors can strongly influence the existence and extent of CH<sub>4</sub> and N<sub>2</sub>O emissions from composting piles. These local factors include:

- Aeration
- Density of compost
- Frequency of turning
- Feedstock composition
- Climate (temperature and precipitation)
- Size of compost piles

After reviewing a large number of studies, EPA found that Williams et al. (2019) provided the most applicable results for WARM and forms the basis of EPA's estimates of fugitive emissions for composted waste in WARM. The study characterizes CH<sub>4</sub> and N<sub>2</sub>O emissions for both biowaste and green waste in well-managed compost windrows across several weeks. Biowaste is composed of separated organic household waste, including food waste. Green waste, or garden waste, is composed primarily of plant waste such as grass and yard trimmings. In WARM, food waste is classified as a bio-waste for the purposes of estimating fugitive emissions, whereas yard trimmings are classified as a green waste.

<sup>15</sup> WARM assumes that mixed organics is comprised of 53% food waste and 47% yard waste.

#### 4.2.2.2 Methane Generated from Composting

There is a consensus within the scientific literature that CH<sub>4</sub> is emitted in measurable quantities even in well-managed compost piles. Williams et. al (2019) measured the average emissions from windrow composting on green waste and a mixture of food and green waste in California for one ton of dry mass of waste. Green waste is defined as landscaping materials including grass, leaves and woody materials. Mixed waste includes both food (8.6%) and green (91.4%) waste where food waste includes pre-consumer food scraps from a university coffee house. Exhibit 4-3 provides a summary of these emissions.

**Exhibit 4-3: Fugitive CH<sub>4</sub> Emissions from Composting Biowaste and Green Waste**

Compost Feedstock	CH <sub>4</sub> Emissions (MTCO <sub>2</sub> E/ton)
Food Waste	0.07
Green waste	0.10

#### 4.2.2.3 Nitrous Oxide Generated from Composting

Knowledge of the mechanism of N<sub>2</sub>O emissions from composting is significantly less developed than that of either CO<sub>2</sub> or CH<sub>4</sub> emissions. N<sub>2</sub>O is formed during both incomplete ammonium oxidation and incomplete denitrification processes, but there is debate over which process is most important in composting (Lou and Nair, 2009). While CH<sub>4</sub> is usually detected near the bottom of piles where oxygen is absent, N<sub>2</sub>O often forms closer to the surface. Exhibit 4-4 provides a summary of these emissions.

**Exhibit 4-4: Fugitive N<sub>2</sub>O Emissions from Composting Biowaste and Green Waste**

Compost Feedstock	N <sub>2</sub> O Emissions (MTCO <sub>2</sub> E/ton)
Food Waste	0.01
Green waste	0.01

#### 4.2.2.4 Summary of Fugitive Emissions Generated from Composting

Combining CH<sub>4</sub> and N<sub>2</sub>O emissions, the net fugitive emissions from composting comprise 0.12 and 0.17 MTCO<sub>2</sub>E/ton for food waste and green waste, respectively. For mixed organics and PLA, WARM uses a weighted emission factor that considers the relative amounts of biowaste and green waste composted in the United States.<sup>16</sup> For an overview of fugitive emissions by material type, see Exhibit 4-5.

**Exhibit 4-5: Total Fugitive Emissions from Composting, by Material Type**

Material Type	Fugitive Emissions (MTCO <sub>2</sub> E/ton)
PLA	0.10
Food Waste	0.08
Yard Trimmings	0.12
Grass	0.12
Leaves	0.12.17
Branches	0.12
Mixed Organics	0.10

Note that totals from Exhibit 4-3 and Exhibit 4-4 may not add due to rounding.

#### 4.2.3 Avoided Fertilizer Offset

EPA assumes that compost applied directly to soil allows for some synthetic fertilizer use to be avoided. A life-cycle assessment harmonization study conducted by the Oregon DEQ (2014) reviewed impacts from composting of food waste found that compost contains significantly smaller amounts of

<sup>16</sup> WARM assumes that mixed organics is comprised of 53% food waste and 47% yard waste.

nutrients compared to fertilizers. The Oregon DEQ (2014) study, which is based on end uses of home gardens, landscapers, nurseries, and bulk agriculture, assumes that approximately 25% of synthetic fertilizer use is displaced by end users applying food waste compost. Based on this information, EPA assumes an offset of 0.03 MTCO<sub>2</sub>e/ton associated with the application of composted food waste. Due to a lack of available information, EPA also assumes that the compost generated during composting of yard waste does not offset any synthetic fertilizer use when applied to agricultural land.

#### **4.2.4 Carbon Storage Resulting from Compost Application to Soils**

##### **4.2.4.1 Background on Carbon Storage in Soils**

The stock of carbon in soils is the result of a balance between inputs (usually plant matter) and outputs (primarily CO<sub>2</sub> flux during decomposition of organic matter). The entire portion of carbon held in the soil and undergoing decomposition is collectively referred to as “soil organic matter” (SOM) or “soil organic carbon” (SOC). SOC is a mixture of different organic compounds that decompose at vastly differing rates. Soils contain thousands of different SOC compounds that microbial degradation or abiotic condensation reactions transform into new structures. The more complex of these molecular soil structures tend to have a low decomposition rate and often are identified as humus (Davidson and Janssens, 2006). Strong evidence exists that SOC decomposition decreases with increasing depth (Meersmans et al., 2009). The top layers of soil generally contain organic matter (such as plant residues) that decomposes quickly, meaning that carbon in this portion of the soil is likely to be relatively young. The carbon dynamics in deeper soil layers and the driving factors behind vertical distribution of SOC are poorly understood.

During composting, microbes degrade the original waste materials into organic compounds through a variety of pathways. During this decomposition, approximately 80 percent of the initial organic matter is emitted as CO<sub>2</sub> (Beck-Friis et al., 2000). The remainder of the organic compounds eventually stabilize and become resistant to further rapid microbial decomposition (i.e., recalcitrant) (Francou et al., 2008). Mature compost is characterized as containing a high percentage of these stable, humic substances. When the compost is mature, nearly all of the water-soluble compounds (such as dissolved organic carbon) will have leached out (Bernal et al., 1998).

While EPA is currently researching the mechanisms and magnitude of carbon storage, WARM assumes that carbon from compost remains stored in the soil through two main mechanisms: direct storage of carbon in depleted soils and carbon stored in non-reactive humus compounds. WARM calculates the carbon storage impact of each carbon storage path separately and then adds them together to estimate the carbon storage factor associated with each short ton of organics composted.

##### **4.2.4.2 Soil Carbon Storage Calculation**

To calculate soil carbon storage, EPA simulated soil organic matter pools using the Century model, which is described in Section 4.2.5. EPA ran more than 30 scenarios with varied compost application rates and frequency, site characteristics, fertilization rates, and crop residue management. Based on this analysis, EPA concluded that while a single compost application does initially increase soil carbon, the carbon storage rate declines with time after the application. Using a timeframe of 10 years to calculate carbon storage, only a fraction of the initial carbon added remained in the soil at the end of

that time period. EPA included this fraction of added carbon per short ton of compost that remained present in the soil after 10 years in the WARM composting emission factor, as shown in Exhibit 4-1.<sup>17</sup>

#### **4.2.4.3 Alternative Carbon Storage Hypotheses**

When EPA first incorporated into WARM composting as a materials management option, the agency conducted research but could not identify sufficient primary data that could be used to develop quantitative estimates of the soil carbon storage benefits of compost. EPA developed modeling approaches to investigate the possible effects of compost application on soil carbon storage. In addition to the humus formation and depleted soils mechanisms mentioned earlier, EPA considered the following two possible mechanisms for the effect of compost on soil carbon:

- Nitrogen in compost may stimulate higher productivity, thus generating more crop residues. This fertilization effect would increase soil carbon because of the larger volume of crop residues, which serves as organic matter input.
- The application of compost produces a multiplier effect by qualitatively changing the dynamics of the carbon cycling system and increasing the retention of carbon from non-compost sources. Some studies of other compost feedstocks (e.g., farmyard manure, legumes) have indicated that the addition of organic matter to soil plots can increase the potential for storage of soil organic carbon. The carbon increase apparently comes not only from the organic matter directly, but also from retention of a higher proportion of carbon from residues of crops grown on the soil. This multiplier effect could enable compost to increase carbon storage by more than its own direct contribution to carbon mass accumulation.

EPA concluded from the Century simulations that a shortage of nitrogen can modestly increase crop productivity with compost application, which results in higher inputs of crop residues into the soil and an increased carbon storage rate. As noted above, our analysis assumed that farmers will supply sufficient synthetic fertilizer to crops to maintain commercial yields, in addition to any compost added, so that the soil carbon effect of nitrogen fertilization resulting from compost is relatively small. Although several of the experts contacted cited persuasive qualitative evidence of the existence of a multiplier effect, EPA was unable to develop an approach to quantify this process. More information on these two hypotheses and why they were not included in the final carbon storage emission factor appears in Section 4.3.

#### **4.2.5 Century Model Framework and Simulations**

##### **4.2.5.1 Evaluating Possible Soil Carbon Models**

As mentioned earlier, EPA's composting analysis included an extensive literature review and interviews with experts to consider whether the application of compost leads to long-term storage of carbon in soils. After determining that neither the literature review nor discussions with experts would yield a basis for a quantitative estimate of soil carbon storage, EPA evaluated the feasibility of a simulation modeling approach. EPA initially identified two simulation models with the potential to be applied to the issue of soil carbon storage from compost application: (1) Century and (2) the Rothamsted

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<sup>17</sup> Note that if the time frame is extended to longer periods (and many of the recent discussions of agricultural and forestry offsets in the context of carbon credits would indicate that 10 years is well below the consensus time horizon), the fraction of added carbon per ton of compost that remains present in the soil would be smaller. Although the selection of an appropriate time frame is not the subject of this documentation, EPA may later revisit the choice of time frame.

C (ROTHC-26.3) model.<sup>18</sup> Both are peer-reviewed models that have structure and application that have been described in scores of publications. The models share several features:

- Ability to run multiyear simulations.
- Capability to construct multiple scenarios covering various climate and soil conditions and loading rates.
- Ability to handle interaction of several soil processes, environmental factors, and management scenarios such as carbon: nitrogen (C:N) ratios, aggregate formation, soil texture (e.g., clay content), and cropping regime.

Given the extensive application of Century in the U.S., its availability on the Internet, and its ability to address many of the processes important to compost application, EPA decided to use Century rather than ROTHC-26.3.

#### Description of the Century Soil Model

Century is a FORTRAN model of plant-soil ecosystems that simulates long-term dynamics of carbon, nitrogen, phosphorus, and sulfur. It tracks the movement of carbon through soil pools—active, slow, and passive—and can show changes in carbon levels as a result of the addition of compost.

In addition to soil organic matter pools, carbon can be found in surface (microbial) pools and in above- and below-ground litter pools. The above-ground and below-ground litter pools are divided into metabolic and structural pools based on the ratio of lignin to nitrogen in the litter. The structural pools contain all of the lignin and have much slower decay rates than the metabolic pools. Carbon additions to the system flow through the various pools and can exit the system (e.g., as CO<sub>2</sub>, dissolved carbon, or through crop removals).

The above-ground and below-ground litter pools are split into metabolic and structural pools based on the ratio of lignin to nitrogen in the litter. The structural pools contain all of the lignin and have much slower decay rates than the metabolic pools. The active pool of soil organic matter includes living biomass, some of the fine particulate detritus, most of the non-humic material, and some of the more easily decomposed fulvic acids. The active pool is estimated to have a mean residence time (MRT) of a few months to 10 years (Metherell et al., 1993; Brady and Weil, 1999). The slow pool includes resistant plant material (i.e., high lignin content) derived from the structural pool and other slowly decomposable and chemically resistant components. It has an MRT of 15–100 years. The passive pool of soil organic matter includes very stable materials remaining in the soil for hundreds to thousands of years.

Century does not simulate increased formation of humic substances associated with organic matter additions, nor does it allow for organic matter additions with high humus content to increase the magnitude of the passive pool directly. (Because Century does not account for these processes, EPA developed a separate analysis, described in this section.)

Century contains a submodel to simulate soil organic matter pools. Additional submodels address nitrogen, phosphorus, sulfur, the water budget, leaching, soil temperature, and plant production, as well as individual submodels for various ecosystems (e.g., grassland, cropland). The nitrogen submodel addresses inputs of fertilizer and other sources of nitrogen, mineralization of organic nitrogen, and uptake of nitrogen by plants.

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<sup>18</sup> This model was developed based on long-term observations of soil carbon at Rothamsted, an estate in the United Kingdom where organic amendments have been added to soils since the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

#### 4.2.5.2 Century Simulations

For this analysis, EPA developed a basic agricultural scenario in Century where land was converted from prairie to farmland (growing corn) in 1921 and remained growing corn through 2030.<sup>19</sup>

Several sets of detailed site characteristics from past modeling applications are available to users in Century. EPA chose two settings: an eastern Colorado site with clay loam soil and a southwestern Iowa site with silty clay loam soil. Both settings represent fairly typical Midwestern corn belt situations where agricultural activities have depleted soil organic carbon levels. EPA then ran more than 30 scenarios to examine the effect of the following variables on soil carbon storage:

- Compost application rate and frequency.
- Site characteristics (rainfall, soil type, irrigation regime)
- Fertilization rate
- Crop residue management

EPA adjusted compost application rates using the organic matter (compost) files for each compost application rate included in the analysis. EPA then compared the effect of applying compost annually for 10 years (1996–2005) at seven different application rates: 1.3, 3.2, 6.5, 10, 15, 20, and 40 wet short tons compost per acre (corresponding to 60–1,850 grams of carbon per square meter).<sup>20</sup> EPA also investigated the effect of compost application frequency on the soil carbon storage rate and total carbon levels. EPA ran the model to simulate compost applications of 1.3 wet short tons compost/acre and 3.2 wet short tons compost/acre every year for 10 years (1996–2005) and applications of 1.3 wet short tons compost/acre and 3.2 wet short tons compost/acre applied every five years (in 1996, 2001, and 2006). The simulated compost was specified as having 33 percent lignin,<sup>21</sup> 17:1 C:N ratio,<sup>22</sup> 60:1 carbon-to-phosphorus ratio, and 75:1 carbon-to-sulfur ratio.<sup>23</sup> EPA also ran a scenario with no compost application for each combination of site-fertilization-crop residue management. This scenario allowed

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<sup>19</sup> EPA is conducting research into compost markets, and initial findings indicate that compost is not often used in large-scale agricultural applications, but it is often applied in high-end markets, such as landscaping. Century and other widely vetted soil carbon models, however, do not readily model the effects of composting on soil carbon for non-agricultural scenarios. Because of this lack of data, EPA chose to simulate composting using the large-scale agricultural scenarios available in Century. EPA is researching methods to improve these assumptions.

<sup>20</sup> The model requires inputs in terms of the carbon application rate in grams per square meter. The relationship between the carbon application rate and compost application rate depends on three factors: the moisture content of compost, the organic matter content (as a fraction of dry weight), and the carbon content (as a fraction of organic matter). Inputs are based on values provided by Dr. Harold Keener of Ohio State University, who estimates that compost has a moisture content of 50 percent, an organic matter fraction (as dry weight) of 88 percent, and a carbon content of 48 percent (as a fraction of organic matter). Thus, on a wet weight basis, 21 percent of compost is carbon.

<sup>21</sup> EPA estimated the percentage of lignin based on the lignin fractions for grass, leaves, and branches specified by compost experts (particularly Dr. Gregory Evanylo at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, and lignin fractions reported in M.A. Barlaz [1997]). FAL provided an estimate of the fraction of grass, leaves, and branches in yard trimmings in a personal communication with ICF Consulting, November 14, 1995. Subsequently, FAL obtained and provided data showing that the composition of yard trimmings varies widely in different states. The percentage composition used here (50 percent grass, 25 percent leaves, and 25 percent branches on a wet weight basis) is within the reported range.

<sup>22</sup> The C:N ratio was taken from Brady and Weil (1999).

<sup>23</sup> C:P and C:S ratios were based on the literature and conversations with composting experts, including Dr. Gregory Evanylo at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

EPA to control for compost application that is, to calculate the change in carbon storage attributable only to the addition of compost.

Finally, EPA simulated two harvest regimes, one where the corn is harvested for silage (where 95 percent of the above-ground biomass is removed) and the other where corn is harvested for grain (where the stover is left behind to decompose on the field). These simulations enabled EPA to isolate the effect of the carbon added directly to the system in the form of compost, as opposed to total carbon inputs, which include crop residues.

#### **4.2.5.3 Analysis of Compost Application Impacts on Depleted Soils**

The output data cover the period from 1900 through 2030. In general, EPA focused on the difference in carbon storage between a baseline scenario where no compost was applied and a with-compost scenario. EPA calculated the difference between the two scenarios to isolate the effect of compost application. EPA converted output data in grams of carbon per square meter to MTCO<sub>2</sub>E by multiplying by area in square meters and multiplying by the molecular weight ratio of CO<sub>2</sub> to carbon.

To express results in units comparable to those for other sources and sinks, EPA divided the increase in carbon storage by the short tons of organics required to produce the compost.<sup>24</sup> That is, the factors are expressed as a carbon storage rate in units of MTCO<sub>2</sub>E per wet short ton of organic inputs (not MTCO<sub>2</sub>E per short ton of compost).

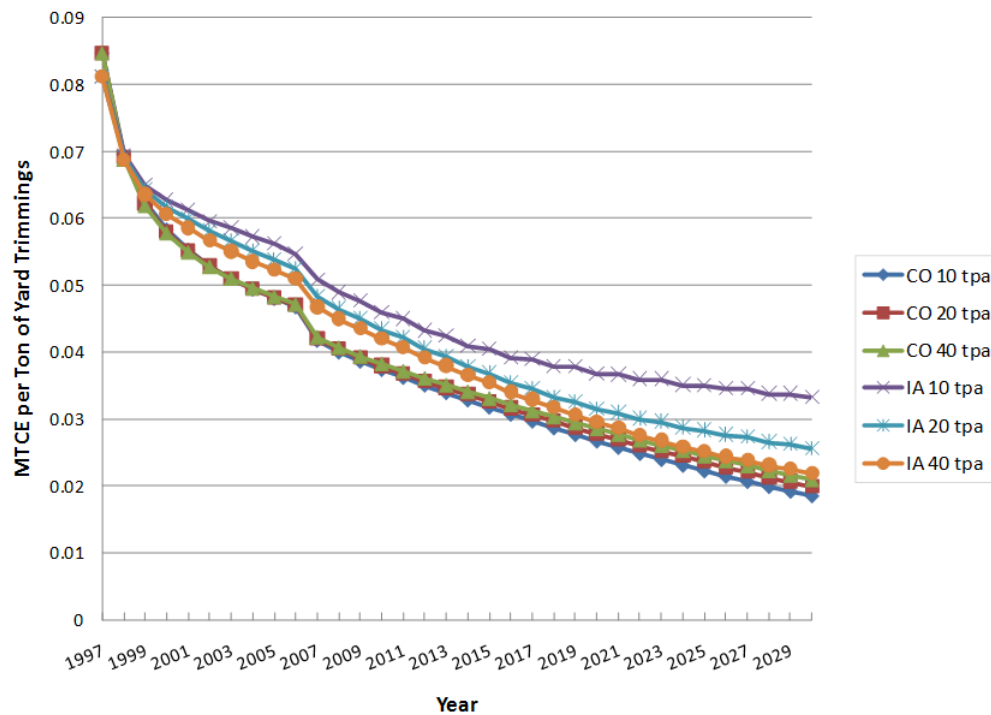
As Exhibit 4-6 illustrates, EPA's Century analysis found that the carbon storage rate declines with time after initial application. The rate is similar across application rates and frequencies, and across the site conditions that were simulated. Exhibit 4-6 shows results for the Colorado and Iowa sites, for the 10-, 20-, and 40-ton per acre application rates. As indicated on the graph, the soil carbon storage rate varies from about 0.08 MTCE (0.30 MTCO<sub>2</sub>E) per wet ton yard trimmings immediately after compost application in 1997 to about 0.02 MTCE (0.07 MTCO<sub>2</sub>E) per ton in 2030, 24 years after the last application in 2006.

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<sup>24</sup> EPA assumed 2.1 tons of yard trimmings are required to generate 1 ton of composted yard trimmings; thus, to convert the results in WARM (in MTCO<sub>2</sub>E per wet ton yard trimmings) to MTCO<sub>2</sub>E per wet ton of compost, multiply by 2.1. To convert to MTCO<sub>2</sub>E per dry ton compost, multiply values in WARM by 4.2 (assuming 50 percent moisture content).



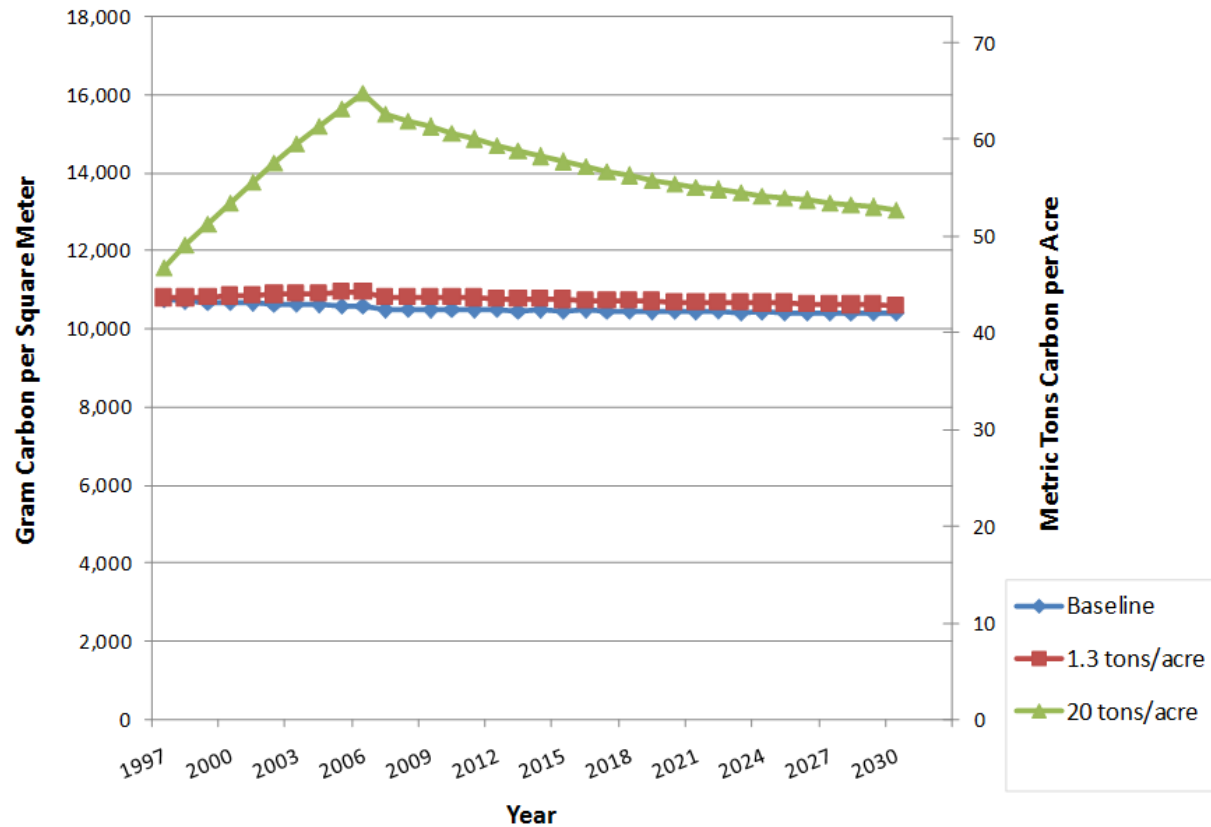
**Exhibit 4-6: Soil Carbon Storage—Colorado and Iowa Sites; 10, 20, and 40 Tons-per-Acre Application Rates**



The similarity across the various site conditions and application rates reflects the fact that the dominant process controlling carbon retention is the decomposition of organic materials in the various pools. As simulated by Century, this process is governed by first-order kinetics, i.e., the rate is independent of organic matter concentration or the rate of organic matter additions.

When viewed from the perspective of total carbon, rather than as a storage rate per ton of inputs to the composting process, both soil organic carbon concentrations and total carbon stored per acre increase with increasing application rates (see Exhibit 4-7). Soil organic carbon concentrations increase throughout the period of compost application, peak in 2006 (the last year of application), and decline thereafter as a result of decomposition of the imported carbon. Exhibit 4-7 shows total carbon storage (including baseline carbon) in soils on the order of 40 to 65 metric tons per acre. (The range would be higher with higher compost application rates or longer term applications.)

**Exhibit 4-7: Total Soil C; Iowa Site, Corn Harvested for Grain**



**4.2.5.4 Century Simulation of Nitrogen Fertilization Effect**

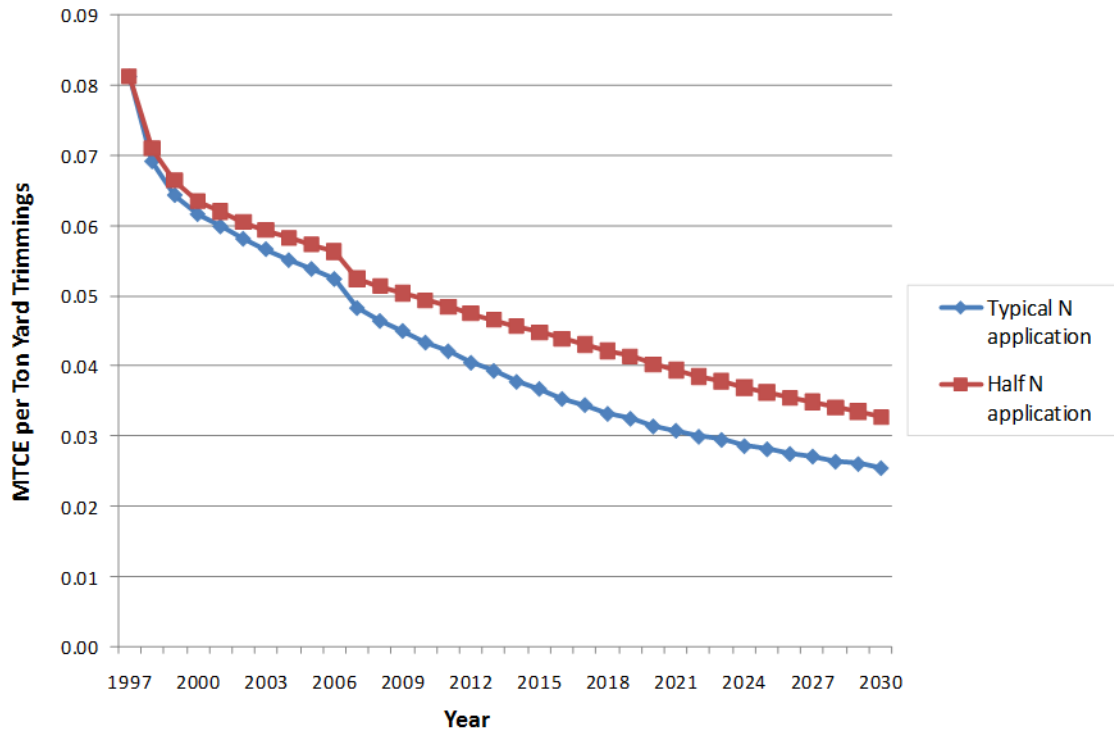
While the decomposition of organic materials is the primary process driving soil carbon retention, EPA’s Century analysis also revealed several secondary effects of compost application, including the effects of compost application on nitrogen availability and moisture retention. EPA performed additional Century simulations to quantify the nitrogen fertilization effect, or the hypothesis that mineralization of nitrogen in compost could stimulate crop growth, leading to production of more organic residues and increased soil organic carbon levels. The strength of this effect varies, depending on the availability of other sources of nitrogen (N). To investigate this hypothesis, EPA analyzed different rates of synthetic fertilizer addition ranging from zero up to a typical rate to attain average crop yield (Colorado site: 90 lbs N/acre; Iowa site: 124 lbs N/per acre). EPA also evaluated fertilizer application at half of these typical rates.

Exhibit 4-8 shows the carbon storage rate for the Iowa site and the effect of nitrogen fertilization. The two curves in the exhibit represent the difference in carbon storage between a with-compost scenario (20 tons per acre) and a baseline, where compost is not applied. The nitrogen application rates differ in the following ways:

- The curve labeled “Typical N application” represents application of 124 lbs per acre for both the compost and baseline scenarios. Because the nitrogen added through the compost has little effect when nitrogen is already in abundant supply, this curve portrays a situation where the carbon storage is attributable solely to the organic matter additions in the compost.

- The curve labeled “Half N application” represents application of 62 lbs per acre. In this scenario, mineralization of nitrogen added by the compost has an incremental effect on crop productivity compared to the baseline. The difference between the baseline and compost application runs reflects both organic matter added by the compost and additional biomass produced in response to the nitrogen contributed by the compost.

**Exhibit 4-8: Incremental Carbon Storage as a Function of Nitrogen Application Rate at the Iowa Site**



The difference in incremental carbon storage rates between the two fertilization scenarios is less than 0.01 MTCE (0.03 MTCO<sub>2</sub>E) per ton, indicating that the nitrogen fertilization effect is relatively small. Note that this finding is based on the assumption that farmers applying compost also will apply sufficient synthetic fertilizer to maintain economic crop yields. The effect would be larger if this assumption is not well-founded or in situations where compost is applied as a soil amendment for road construction, landfill cover, or similar situations.

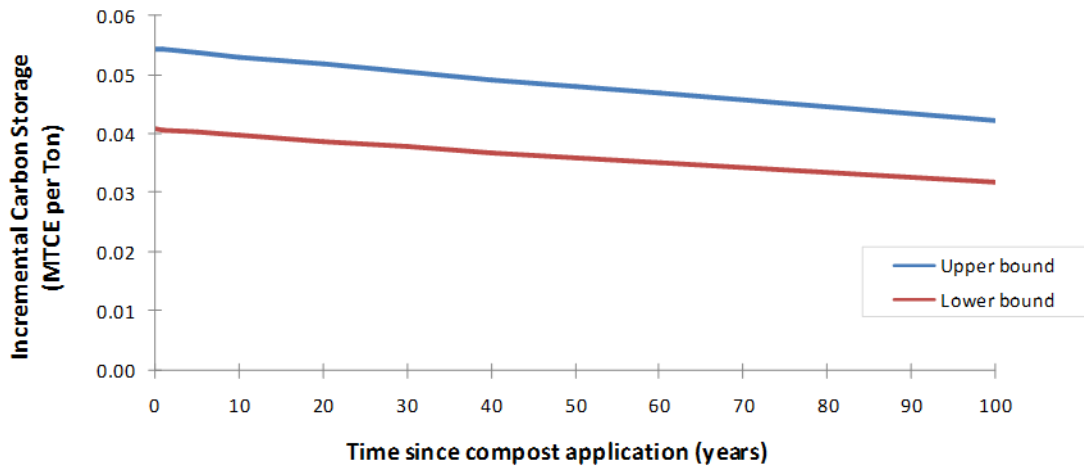
**4.2.6 Humus Formation Carbon Storage**

Significant evidence exists that compost contains stable compounds, such as humus, and that the carbon stored in that humus should be considered passive when added to the soil because it breaks down much more slowly than crop residues. As mentioned earlier, the Century model does not allow carbon inputs to flow directly into the passive pools; therefore, EPA used a bounding analysis to estimate the upper and lower limits of this humus formation mechanism of carbon storage. This bounding analysis rested on two primary variables: (1) the fraction of carbon in compost that is considered very stable and (2) the rate at which passive carbon is degraded to CO<sub>2</sub>. Based on the expert judgment of Dr. Michael Cole from the University of Illinois, EPA found that between four to 20 percent of the carbon in compost degrades very quickly, and the remainder can be considered either slow or passive. Dr. Cole found 400 years to be the average of the reported sequestration times of carbon in the soil. The upper and lower bounds of the rate of carbon storage in soils resulting from the humus effect are shown in Exhibit 4-9. EPA took an average value of the upper and lower bounds after 10 years to

estimate the carbon storage per short ton of compost that was stored in the passive carbon pool after year 10.

In WARM’s final calculation, EPA weighed the carbon values from the two carbon storage mechanisms according to the estimated percentage of compost that is passive (assumed to be 52 percent), and then used the total to estimate the sequestration value associated with composting, as shown in Exhibit 4-9.

**Exhibit 4-9: Carbon Storage Resulting from Humus Effect, Bounding Estimate**

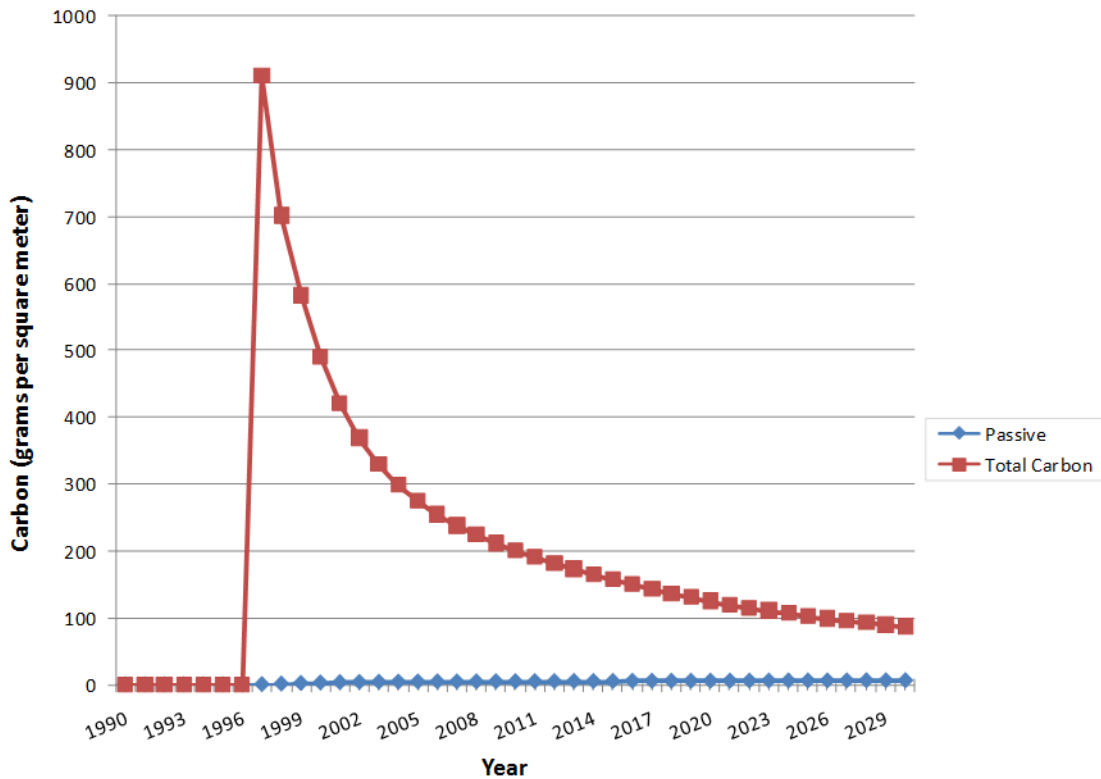


**4.2.6.1 Eliminating the Possibility of Double-Counting**

EPA adopted the approach of adding the humus formation effect to the direct carbon storage effect to capture the range of carbon storage benefits associated with compost application; however, this dual approach creates the possibility of double counting because the Century simulation may include both the direct carbon storage and humus formation effects. In an effort to eliminate double counting, EPA evaluated the way that Century partitions compost carbon after it is applied to the soil.

To do so, EPA ran a Century model simulation of compost addition during a single year and compared the results to a corresponding reference case without compost. EPA calculated the difference in carbon in each of the Century pools for the two simulations and found that the change in the passive pool represented less than 0.01 percent of the change in total carbon; therefore, Century is not adding recalcitrant carbon directly to the passive pool. Next, EPA graphed the change in the passive pool over time to ensure that the recalcitrant compost carbon was not being cycled from the faster pools into the passive pool several years after the compost is applied. As Exhibit 4-10 shows, Century does not introduce significant increments over the base case of recalcitrant carbon into the passive pool at any time.

**Exhibit 4-10: Difference in Carbon Storage Between Compost Addition and Base Case Yearly Application with 20 Tons Compost**



Based on the analysis, it appears that Century is appropriately simulating carbon cycling and storage for all but the passive carbon introduced by compost application. Because passive carbon represents approximately 52 percent of carbon in compost (the midpoint of 45 percent and 60 percent), EPA scaled the Century results by 48 percent to reflect the proportion of carbon that can be classified as fast or slow (i.e., not passive).

**4.2.6.2 WARM Carbon Storage Composting Results**

Exhibit 4-11 shows the two carbon storage mechanisms included in WARM’s analysis of the GHGs associated with composting. The resulting net storage value relies on three main input values: the direct carbon storage, the carbon stored resulting from humus formation, and the percentage of carbon in compost assumed to be passive, or resistant to degradation.

**Exhibit 4-11: The Soil Carbon Restoration Effect and the Increased Humus Formation Effect for the Typical Compost Application Rate of 20 Short Tons per Acre**

Scenario	Soil Carbon Restoration			Increased Humus Formation	Net Carbon Flux
	Unweighted	Proportion of C that Is Not Passive (%)	Weighted Estimate		
Annual application of 20 short tons of compost per acre	(0.04)	0.48	(0.07)	(0.17)	(0.24)

**4.3 LIMITATIONS**

Because of data and resource constraints, this chapter does not explore the full range of conditions under which compost is managed and applied and how these conditions would affect the results of this analysis. Instead, this study attempts to provide an analysis of GHG emissions and sinks

associated with centralized composting of organics under a limited set of scenarios. The lack of primary research on carbon storage associated with composting limited EPA's analysis. The limited availability of data forced EPA to rely on two modeling approaches, each with its own set of limitations. In addition, the analysis was limited by the scope of WARM, which is intended to present life-cycle GHG emissions of waste management practices for selected material types, including food discards and yard trimmings.

#### **4.3.1 Limitations of Modeling Approaches**

Because of data and resource constraints, EPA was unable to use Century to evaluate the variation in carbon storage impacts for a wide range of compost feedstocks (e.g., yard trimmings mixed with food discards, food discards alone). As noted earlier, resource constraints limited the number of soil types, climates, and compost applications simulated. The Century results also incorporate the limitations of the model itself, which have been well documented elsewhere. Perhaps most important, the model's predictions of soil organic matter levels are driven by four variables: annual precipitation, temperature, soil texture, and plant lignin content. Beyond these, the model is limited by its sensitivity to several factors for which data are difficult or impossible to obtain (e.g., pre-settlement grazing intensity, nitrogen input during soil development) (Parton et al., 1987). The model's monthly simulation intervals limit its ability to fully address potential interactions between nitrogen supply, plant growth, soil moisture, and decomposition rates, which may be sensitive to conditions that vary on a shorter time scale (Paustian et al., 1992). In addition, the model is not designed to capture the hypothesis that, because of the compost application, soil ecosystem dynamics change and more carbon is stored than is added to the soil (i.e., the multiplier effect).

Century simulates carbon movement through organic matter pools. Although the model is designed to evaluate additions of organic matter in general, EPA does not believe that it has been applied in the past to evaluate the application of organics compost. Century is parameterized to partition carbon to the various pools based on ratios of lignin to nitrogen and lignin to total carbon, not on the amount of organic material that has been converted to humus already. EPA addressed this limitation by developing an add-on analysis to evaluate humus formation in the passive pool, scaling the Century results, and summing the soil carbon storage values. There is some potential for double counting, to the extent that Century is routing some carbon to various pools that is also accounted for in the incremental humus analysis. EPA believes that this effect is likely to be minor.

The bounding analysis used to analyze increased humus formation is limited by the lack of data specifically dealing with composts composed of yard trimmings or food discards. This analysis is also limited by the lack of data on carbon in compost that is passive. The approach of taking the average value from the two scenarios is simplistic, but it appears to be the best available option.

#### **4.3.2 Limitations Related to the Scope of the Emission Factors**

As indicated earlier, this chapter describes EPA's estimates of the GHG-related impacts of composting organics. EPA developed these estimates within the framework of the larger WARM development effort; therefore, the presentation of results, estimation of emissions and sinks, and description of ancillary benefits is not comprehensive. The remainder of this section describes specific limitations of the compost analysis.

As noted in the other documentation chapters, the GHG impacts of composting reported in this chapter are calculated using a methodology that facilitates comparison between composting and other possible disposal options for yard trimmings (i.e., landfilling and combustion). To present absolute GHG emission factors for composted yard trimmings that could be used to compare composting to a baseline of leaving yard trimmings on the ground where they fall, EPA would need to analyze the home soil. In

particular, the carbon storage benefits of composting would need to be compared to the impact of removal of yard trimmings on the home soil.

As mentioned in Section 4.2, the lack of data and resources constrained EPA's analysis and, therefore, the analysis considers a small sampling of feedstocks and a specific application scenario (i.e., degraded agricultural soil). EPA analyzed two types of compost feedstocks—yard trimmings and food discards—although sewage sludge, animal manure, and several other compost feedstocks also may have significant GHG implications. Similarly, it was assumed that compost was applied to home gardens, landscapers, nurseries, and bulk agriculture, despite widespread use of compost in land reclamation, silviculture, and horticulture.

This analysis did not consider the full range of soil conservation and management practices that could be used in combination with compost and the impacts of those practices on carbon storage. Some research indicates that adding compost to agricultural soils in conjunction with various conservation practices enhances the generation of soil organic matter to a much greater degree than applying compost alone. Examples of these conservation practices include conservation tillage, no tillage, residue management, crop rotation, wintering, and summer fallow elimination. Research also suggests that allowing crop residues to remain on the soil rather than turning them over helps to protect and sustain the soil while simultaneously enriching it. Alternatively, conventional tillage techniques accelerate soil erosion, increase soil aeration, and hence lead to greater GHG emissions (Lal et al., 1998). Compost use also has been shown to increase soil water retention; moister soil gives a number of ancillary benefits, including reduced irrigation costs and reduced energy used for pumping water. Compost can also play an important role in the adaptation strategies that will be necessary as climate zones shift and some areas become more arid. Additionally, EPA includes a fertilizer offset from the application of compost to soil (Oregon DEQ 2014). However, this study only examines the offset using food waste as the feedstock for compost. EPA will continue to research studies that examine the fertilizer offset using yard waste as feedstock for compost.

As is the case in other chapters, the methodology EPA used to estimate GHG emissions from composting did not allow for variations in transportation distances. EPA recognizes that the density of landfills versus composting sites in any given area would have an effect on the extent of transportation emissions derived from composting. For example, in states that have a higher density of composting sites, the hauling distance to such a site would be smaller and thus require less fuel than transportation to a landfill. Alternatively, transporting compost from urban areas, where compost feedstocks may be collected, to farmlands, where compost is typically applied, could require more fuel because of the large distance separating the sites.

In addition to the carbon storage benefits of adding compost to agricultural soils, composting can lead to improved soil quality, improved productivity, and cost savings. For example, nutrients in compost tend to foster soil fertility (Brady and Weil, 1999). In fact, composts have been used to establish plant growth on land previously unable to support vegetation.

#### **4.3.3 Ongoing Research to Improve Composting Estimates**

EPA is researching several aspects of the composting analysis to improve existing assumptions based on updated research that is emerging. EPA's literature review focused on the following key topics: potential end uses and markets for compost, the shares of compost currently used in different applications in the United States, humus formation, the carbon storage timeframe, the multiplier effect, and other environmental benefits of composting.

Research on the potential end uses and markets for compost suggested that the horticultural/landscaping markets appear to be the most popular markets for compost in the United States. While data quantifying the size of these markets are limited, this finding suggests that the assumptions underlying the current WARM modeling may need to be re-examined. Further research into this subject may be warranted to determine exactly how compost is used in these urban or higher-end markets.

During EPA's research on carbon storage mechanisms, the agency uncovered new field research that may provide a basis for using primary data to quantify the carbon storage emission factor. If EPA decides to calculate a new carbon sequestration value based on field data, both the Century and bounding analyses will be superseded by this approach. EPA has also conducted extensive research into potential GHG emissions from composting. Preliminary research indicates that small amounts of both CH<sub>4</sub> and N<sub>2</sub>O emissions are released during composting, even in well-managed piles.

Addressing the possible GHG emission reductions and other environmental benefits achievable by applying compost instead of chemical fertilizers, fungicides, and pesticides was beyond the scope of this documentation. Manufacturing those agricultural products requires energy. To the extent that compost may replace or reduce the need for these substances, composting may result in reduced energy-related GHG emissions. Although EPA understands that generally compost is applied for its soil amendment properties rather than for pest control, compost has been effective in reducing the need for harmful or toxic pesticides and fungicides.<sup>25</sup> Analyses of these benefits, however, are highly sensitive to assumptions about composting and fertilizer application rates, and information on the typical applications of these two soil additions is lacking.

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<sup>25</sup> For example, the use of compost may reduce or eliminate the need for soil fumigation with methyl bromide (an ozone-depleting substance) to kill plant pests and pathogens.



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## 5 COMBUSTION

This document presents an overview of combustion as a waste management strategy in relation to the development of material-specific emission factors for EPA's Waste Reduction Model (WARM). Included are estimates of the net greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from combustion of most of the materials considered in WARM and several categories of mixed waste.

### 5.1 A SUMMARY OF THE GHG IMPLICATIONS OF COMBUSTION

Combustion of municipal solid waste (MSW) results in emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> and N<sub>2</sub>O. Note that CO<sub>2</sub> from combustion of biomass (such as paper products and yard trimmings) is not counted because it is biogenic (as explained in the WARM Background and Overview chapter). WARM estimates emissions from combustion of MSW in waste-to-energy (WTE) facilities. WARM does not consider any recovery of materials from the MSW stream that may occur before MSW is delivered to the combustor.

In the United States, about 80 WTE facilities process more than 30 million tons of MSW annually (ERC, 2014). WTE facilities can be divided into three categories: (1) mass burn, (2) modular, and (3) refuse-derived fuel (RDF). A mass burn facility generates electricity and/or steam from the combustion of mixed MSW. Most of the facilities (76 percent) employ mass burn technology. Modular WTE plants are generally smaller than mass burn plants, and are prefabricated off-site so that they can be assembled quickly where they are needed. Because of their similarity to mass burn facilities, modular facilities are treated as part of the mass burn category for the purposes of this analysis.

An RDF facility combusts MSW that has undergone varying degrees of processing, from simple removal of bulky and noncombustible items to more complex processes (such as shredding and material recovery) that result in a finely divided fuel. Processing MSW into RDF yields a more uniform fuel that has a higher heating value than that used by mass burn or modular WTE. MSW processing into RDF involves both manual and mechanical separation to remove materials such as glass and metals that have little or no fuel value. In the United States, approximately 14 facilities combust RDF (ERC, 2010).

This study analyzed the net GHG emissions from combustion of all individual and mixed waste streams in WARM at mass burn and RDF facilities, with the exception of asphalt concrete, drywall, and fiberglass insulation. These three materials were excluded because EPA determined that they are not typically combusted at end of life. Note that **WARM incorporates only the emission factors for mass burn facilities**, due to (1) the relatively small number of RDF facilities in the United States and (2) the fact that the RDF emission factors are based on data from only one RDF facility.

Net emissions consist of (1) emissions from the transportation of waste to a combustion facility, (2) emissions of non-biogenic CO<sub>2</sub>, and (3) emissions of N<sub>2</sub>O minus (4) avoided GHG emissions from the electric utility sector and (5) avoided GHG emissions due to the recovery and recycling of ferrous metals at the combustor. There is some evidence that as combustor ash ages, it absorbs CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere. However, EPA did not count absorbed CO<sub>2</sub> because the quantity is estimated to be less than 0.02 MTCO<sub>2</sub>E per ton of MSW combusted.<sup>26</sup> The results of this analysis for the materials contained in WARM and the explanations for each of these results are discussed in section 5.3.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Based on data provided by Dr. Jürgen Vehlow of the Institut für Technische Chemie in Karlsruhe, Germany, EPA estimated that the ash from one ton of MSW would absorb roughly 0.004 MTCE of CO<sub>2</sub>.

<sup>27</sup> Note that Exhibit 5-1, Exhibit 5-2, and Exhibit 5-6 do not show mixed paper. Mixed paper is shown in the summary exhibit. The summary values for mixed paper are based on the proportions of the four paper types (newspaper, office paper, corrugated containers, and magazines/third-class mail) that make up the different "mixed paper" definitions.

## 5.2 CALCULATING THE GHG IMPACTS OF COMBUSTION

This study's general approach was to estimate (1) the gross emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> and N<sub>2</sub>O from MSW combustion (including emissions from transportation of waste to the combustor and ash from the combustor to a landfill) and (2) the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions avoided because of displaced electric utility generation and decreased energy requirements for production processes using recycled inputs. A comprehensive evaluation would also consider the fate of carbon remaining in combustor ash. Depending on its chemical form, carbon may be aerobically degraded to CO<sub>2</sub>, anaerobically degraded to CH<sub>4</sub>, or remain in a relatively inert form and be stored. Unless the ash carbon is converted to CH<sub>4</sub> (which EPA considers unlikely), the effect on the net GHG emissions will be very small. To obtain an estimate of the *net* GHG emissions from MSW combustion, the GHG emissions avoided were subtracted from the direct GHG emissions. EPA estimated the net GHG emissions from waste combustion per ton of mixed MSW and per ton of each selected material in MSW. The remainder of this section describes how EPA developed these estimates.

### 5.2.1 Emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> from WTE Facilities

The carbon in MSW has two distinct origins: some of it is derived from sustainably harvested biomass (i.e., carbon in plant matter that was converted from CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere through photosynthesis), and the remainder is from non-biomass sources, e.g., plastic and synthetic rubber derived from petroleum.

As explained in the [WARM Background and Overview](#) chapter, WARM considers only CO<sub>2</sub> that derives from fossil sources and does not consider biogenic CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Therefore, only CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from the combustion of non-biomass components of MSW—plastic, textiles and rubber—were counted. These components make up a relatively small share of total MSW, so only a small portion of the total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from combustion are considered in WARM.

To estimate the non-biogenic carbon content of the plastics, textiles, rubber and leather contained in one ton of mixed MSW, EPA first established assumptions for the non-biogenic share of carbon in these materials. For plastics in products in MSW, EPA assumed that all carbon is non-biogenic carbon, because biogenic plastics likely make up a small but unknown portion of products. For rubber and leather products in MSW, EPA assumed that the non-biogenic share of carbon contained in clothing and footwear is 25 percent; this assumption is based on expert judgment. The non-biogenic share of carbon in containers, packaging, and other durables is 100 percent; and the non-biogenic share of carbon in other nondurables is 75 percent (EPA, 2010). For textile products in MSW, EPA assumed that the non-biogenic share of carbon is 55 percent (DeZan, 2000). EPA then calculated the non-biogenic carbon content of each of these material groups. For plastics in products in MSW, EPA used the molecular formula of each resin type to assume that PET is 63 percent carbon; PVC is 38 percent carbon; polystyrene is 92 percent carbon; HDPE, LDPE, and polypropylene are 86 percent carbon; and a weighted average of all other resins is 66 percent carbon (by weight). Based on the amount of each plastic discarded in 2015 (EPA, 2018), EPA calculated a weighted carbon content of 78 percent for plastics in mixed MSW. For rubber and leather products, EPA used the weighted average carbon content of rubbers consumed in 2002 to estimate a carbon content of 85 percent (by weight) for rubber and leather products in mixed MSW. For textiles, EPA used the average carbon content of the four main synthetic fiber types to estimate a carbon content of 70 percent (by weight) for textiles in mixed MSW. Next, using data from BioCycle's *The State of Garbage in America* (Van Haaren et al., 2010), EPA assumed that seven percent of discards are combusted in the United States. Data from BioCycle is used instead of EPA's *Advancing Sustainable Materials Management: Facts and Figures* report (EPA, 2018a), because it is based off of direct reporting, and provides a more accurate representation of the amount

of materials discarded at WTE facilities. Additionally, these data are also used in order to maintain consistency with the data source used in EPA's annual *Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks* report. Based on these assumptions, EPA estimated that there are 0.10 tons of non-biogenic carbon in the plastic, textiles, rubber and leather contained in one ton of mixed MSW (EPA, 2018a; Van Haaren et al., 2010).

The 10 percent non-biomass carbon content of mixed MSW was then converted to units of MTCO<sub>2</sub>E per short ton of mixed MSW combusted. The resulting value for mixed MSW is shown in Exhibit 5-1. Note that if EPA had used a best-case assumption for textiles (i.e., assuming that they have no petrochemical-based fibers), the resulting value for mixed MSW would have been slightly lower. The values for CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are shown in column (b) of Exhibit 5-1.

**Exhibit 5-1: Gross GHG Emissions from MSW Combustion (MTCO<sub>2</sub>E/Short Ton of Material Combusted)**

(a) Material	(b) Combustion CO <sub>2</sub> Emissions from Non- Biomass per Short Ton Combusted	(c) Combustion N <sub>2</sub> O Emissions per Short Ton Combusted	(d) Transportation CO <sub>2</sub> Emissions per Short Ton Combusted	(e) Gross GHG Emissions per Short Ton Combusted (e = b + c + d)
Aluminum Cans	–	–	0.01	0.01
Aluminum Ingot	–	–	0.01	0.01
Steel Cans	–	–	0.01	0.01
Copper Wire	–	–	0.01	0.01
Glass	–	–	0.01	0.01
HDPE	2.79	–	0.01	2.80
LDPE	2.79	–	0.01	2.80
PET	2.04	–	0.01	2.05
LLDPE	2.79	–	0.01	2.80
PP	2.79	–	0.01	2.80
PS	3.01	–	0.01	3.02
PVC	1.25	–	0.01	1.26
PLA	–	–	0.01	0.01
Corrugated Containers	–	0.04	0.01	0.05
Magazines/Third-Class Mail	–	0.04	0.01	0.05
Newspaper	–	0.04	0.01	0.05
Office Paper	–	0.04	0.01	0.05
Phone Books <sup>a</sup>	–	0.04	0.01	0.05
Textbooks <sup>a</sup>	–	0.04	0.01	0.05
Dimensional Lumber	–	0.04	0.01	0.05
Medium-Density Fiberboard	–	0.04	0.01	0.05
Food Waste	–	0.04	0.01	0.05
Food Waste (meat only)	–	0.04	0.01	0.05
Food Waste (non-meat)	–	0.04	0.01	0.05
Beef	–	0.04	0.01	0.05
Poultry	–	0.04	0.01	0.05
Grains	–	0.04	0.01	0.05
Bread	–	0.04	0.01	0.05
Fruits and Vegetables	–	0.04	0.01	0.05
Dairy Products	–	0.04	0.01	0.05
Yard Trimmings	–	0.04	0.01	0.05
Grass	–	0.04	0.01	0.05
Leaves	–	0.04	0.01	0.05
Branches	–	0.04	0.01	0.05
Mixed Paper (general)	–	0.04	0.01	0.05
Mixed Paper (primarily residential)	–	0.04	0.01	0.05
Mixed Paper (primarily from offices)	–	0.04	0.01	0.05

(a) Material	(b) Combustion CO <sub>2</sub> Emissions from Non- Biomass per Short Ton Combusted	(c) Combustion N <sub>2</sub> O Emissions per Short Ton Combusted	(d) Transportation CO <sub>2</sub> Emissions per Short Ton Combusted	(e) Gross GHG Emissions per Short Ton Combusted (e = b + c + d)
Mixed Metals	–	–	0.01	0.01
Mixed Plastics	2.33	–	0.01	2.34
Mixed Recyclables	0.07	0.03	0.01	0.11
Mixed Organics	–	0.04	0.01	0.05
Mixed MSW	0.38	0.04	0.01	0.43
Carpet	1.67	–	0.01	1.68
Desktop CPUs	0.40	–	0.01	0.40
Portable Electronic Devices	0.88	–	0.01	0.89
Flat-panel Displays	0.73	–	0.01	0.74
CRT Displays	0.63	–	0.01	0.64
Electronic Peripheral	2.22	–	0.01	2.23
Hard-copy Devices	1.91	–	0.01	1.92
Mixed Electronics	0.95	–	0.01	0.96
Clay Bricks	NA	NA	NA	NA
Concrete	NA	NA	NA	NA
Fly Ash	NA	NA	NA	NA
Tires	2.20	–	0.01	2.21
Asphalt Concrete	NA	NA	NA	NA
Asphalt Shingles	0.65	0.04	0.01	0.70
Drywall	NA	NA	NA	NA
Fiberglass Insulation	NA	NA	NA	NA
Vinyl Flooring	0.28	–	0.01	0.29
Wood Flooring	–	0.04	0.05	0.08

– = Zero emissions.

Note that totals may not add due to rounding, and more digits may be displayed than are significant.

<sup>a</sup> The values for phone books and textbooks are proxies, based on newspaper and office paper, respectively.

### 5.2.2 Emissions of N<sub>2</sub>O from WTE Facilities

Studies compiled by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) show that MSW combustion results in measurable emissions of N<sub>2</sub>O, a GHG with a global warming potential (GWP) 298 times that of CO<sub>2</sub> (EPA, 2018a; IPCC, 2007; IPCC, 2006). The IPCC compiled reported ranges of N<sub>2</sub>O emissions, per metric ton of waste combusted, from six classifications of MSW combustors. This study averaged the midpoints of each range and converted the units to MTCO<sub>2</sub>E of N<sub>2</sub>O per ton of MSW. The resulting estimate is 0.04 MTCO<sub>2</sub>E of N<sub>2</sub>O emissions per ton of mixed MSW combusted. Because the IPCC did not report N<sub>2</sub>O values for combustion of individual components of MSW, EPA used the 0.04 value not only for mixed MSW, but also as a proxy for all components of MSW, except for aluminum cans, steel cans, glass, HDPE, LDPE, and PET. This exception was made because at the relatively low combustion temperatures found in MSW combustors, most of the nitrogen in N<sub>2</sub>O emissions is derived from the waste, not from the combustion air. Because aluminum and steel cans, glass, and plastics do not contain nitrogen, EPA concluded that running these materials through an MSW combustor would not result in N<sub>2</sub>O emissions.

### 5.2.3 Emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> from Transportation of Waste and Ash

WARM includes emissions associated with transporting of waste and the subsequent transportation of the residual waste ash to the landfill. Transportation energy emissions occur when fossil fuels are combusted to collect and transport material to the combustion facility and then to operate on-site equipment. Transportation of any individual material in MSW is assumed to use the

same amount of energy as transportation of mixed MSW. To calculate the emissions, WARM relies on assumptions from FAL (1994) for the equipment emissions and NREL's US Life Cycle Inventory Database (USLCI) (NREL, 2015). The NREL emission factor assumes a diesel, short-haul truck.

#### 5.2.4 Estimating Utility CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions Avoided

Most WTE plants in the United States produce electricity. Only a few cogenerate electricity and steam. In this analysis, EPA assumed that the energy recovered with MSW combustion would be in the form of electricity, with the exception of two materials that are not assumed to be combusted at WTE plants. For tires, the avoided utility CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per ton of tires combusted is based on the weighted average of three tire combustion pathways: combustion at cement kilns, power plants, and pulp and paper mills. For asphalt shingles, the avoided utility CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per ton of shingles combusted is equal to the amount of avoided refinery gas combusted at cement kilns where asphalt shingles are combusted. The avoided utility CO<sub>2</sub> emissions analysis is shown in Exhibit 5-2. EPA used three data elements to estimate the avoided electric utility CO<sub>2</sub> emissions associated with combustion of waste in a WTE plant: (1) the energy content of mixed MSW and of each separate waste material considered, (2) the combustion system efficiency in converting energy in MSW to delivered electricity, and (3) the electric utility CO<sub>2</sub> emissions avoided per kilowatt-hour (kWh) of electricity delivered by WTE plants.

**Exhibit 5-2: Avoided Utility GHG Emissions from Combustion at WTE Facilities**

(a)  Material Combusted	(b)  Energy Content (Million Btu Per Ton)	(c)  Mass Burn Combustion System Efficiency (%)	(d)  RDF Combustion System Efficiency (%)	(e)  Emission Factor for Utility- Generated Electricity <sup>a</sup> (MTCO <sub>2</sub> E/ Million Btu of Electricity Delivered)	(f)  Avoided Utility GHG Emissions per Ton Combusted at Mass Burn Facilities <sup>a</sup> (MTCO <sub>2</sub> E) (f = b × c × e)	(g)  Avoided Utility CO <sub>2</sub> per Ton Combusted at RDF Facilities (MTCO <sub>2</sub> E) (g = b × d × e)
Aluminum Cans	(0.67) <sup>b</sup>	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	(0.03)	(0.02)
Aluminum Ingot	(0.67)	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	(0.03)	(0.02)
Steel Cans	(0.42) <sup>b</sup>	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	(0.02)	(0.01)
Copper Wire	(0.55) <sup>c</sup>	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	(0.02)	(0.02)
Glass	(0.47) <sup>b</sup>	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	(0.02)	(0.02)
HDPE	39.97 <sup>d</sup>	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	1.52	1.38
LDPE	39.75 <sup>d</sup>	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	1.51	1.38
PET	21.20	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	0.80	0.73
LLDPE	39.89	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	1.51	1.38
PP	39.90	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	1.51	1.38
PS	36.00	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	1.37	1.25
PVC	15.75	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	0.60	0.55
PLA	16.74	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	0.64	0.58
Corrugated Containers	14.09 <sup>d</sup>	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	0.53	0.49
Magazines/Third- Class Mail	10.52 <sup>d</sup>	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	0.40	0.36
Newspaper	15.90 <sup>d</sup>	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	0.60	0.55
Office Paper	13.60 <sup>d</sup>	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	0.52	0.47
Phone Books	15.90 <sup>d</sup>	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	0.60	0.55
Textbooks	13.60 <sup>d</sup>	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	0.52	0.47
Dimensional Lumber	16.60 <sup>f</sup>	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	0.63	0.58
Medium-Density Fiberboard	16.60 <sup>f</sup>	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	0.63	0.58

(a)  Material Combusted	(b)  Energy Content (Million Btu Per Ton)	(c)  Mass Burn Combustion System Efficiency (%)	(d)  RDF Combustion System Efficiency (%)	(e)  Emission Factor for Utility- Generated Electricity <sup>a</sup> (MTCO <sub>2</sub> E/ Million Btu of Electricity Delivered)	(f)  Avoided Utility GHG Emissions per Ton Combusted at Mass Burn Facilities <sup>a</sup> (MTCO <sub>2</sub> E) (f = b × c × e)	(g)  Avoided Utility CO <sub>2</sub> per Ton Combusted at RDF Facilities (MTCO <sub>2</sub> E) (g = b × d × e)
Food Waste	4.74 <sup>d</sup>	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	0.18	0.16
Food Waste (meat only)	4.74 <sup>d</sup>	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	0.18	0.16
Food Waste (non-meat)	4.74 <sup>d</sup>	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	0.18	0.16
Beef	4.74 <sup>d</sup>	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	0.18	0.16
Poultry	4.74 <sup>d</sup>	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	0.18	0.16
Grains	4.74 <sup>d</sup>	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	0.18	0.16
Bread	4.74 <sup>d</sup>	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	0.18	0.16
Fruits and Vegetables	4.74 <sup>d</sup>	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	0.18	0.16
Dairy Products	4.74 <sup>d</sup>	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	0.18	0.16
Yard Trimmings	5.60 <sup>e</sup>	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	0.21	0.19
Grass	5.60 <sup>e</sup>	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	0.21	0.19
Leaves	5.60 <sup>e</sup>	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	0.21	0.19
Branches	5.60 <sup>e</sup>	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	0.21	0.19
Mixed Paper (general)	NA	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	0.54	NA
Mixed Paper (primarily residential)	NA	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	0.53	NA
Mixed Paper (primarily from offices)	NA	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	0.49	NA
Mixed Metals	NA	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	-0.02	NA
Mixed Plastics	NA	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	1.09	NA
Mixed Recyclables	NA	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	0.50	NA
Mixed Organics	NA	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	0.20	NA
Mixed MSW	10.00 <sup>h</sup>	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	0.38	0.35
Carpet	15.20 <sup>i</sup>	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	0.58	0.53
Desktop CPUs	3.07	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	0.12	0.11
Portable Electronic Devices	3.07	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	0.12	0.11
Flat-panel Displays	3.07	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	0.12	0.11
CRT Displays	3.07	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	0.12	0.11
Electronic Peripherals	3.07	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	0.12	0.11
Hard-copy Devices	3.07	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	0.12	0.11
Mixed Electronics	3.07	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	0.12	0.11
Clay Bricks	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Concrete	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Fly Ash	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Tires	27.78 <sup>j</sup>	NA	NA	NA	1.57	1.57
Asphalt Concrete	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Asphalt Shingles	8.80	NA <sup>k</sup>	NA <sup>k</sup>	NA <sup>k</sup>	1.05 <sup>l</sup>	1.05 <sup>l</sup>
Drywall	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)
Material Combusted	Energy Content (Million Btu Per Ton)	Mass Burn Combustion System Efficiency (%)	RDF Combustion System Efficiency (%)	Emission Factor for Utility-Generated Electricity <sup>a</sup> (MTCO <sub>2</sub> E/ Million Btu of Electricity Delivered)	Avoided Utility GHG Emissions per Ton Combusted at Mass Burn Facilities <sup>a</sup> (MTCO <sub>2</sub> E) (f = b × c × e)	Avoided Utility CO <sub>2</sub> per Ton Combusted at RDF Facilities (MTCO <sub>2</sub> E) (g = b × d × e)
Fiberglass Insulation	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Vinyl Flooring	15.75	17.8%	16.3%	0.21	0.60	0.55
Wood Flooring	17.99 <sup>m</sup>	21.5% <sup>n</sup>	16.3%	0.21	0.82	0.62

NA = Not applicable.

Note that totals may not add due to rounding, and more digits may be displayed than are significant.

<sup>a</sup> The values in this column are based on national average emissions from utility-generated electricity. The Excel version of WARM also allows users to choose region-specific utility-generated factors, which are contained in Exhibit 5-4.

<sup>b</sup> EPA developed these estimates based on data on the specific heat of aluminum, steel, and glass and calculated the energy required to raise the temperature of aluminum, steel, and glass from ambient temperature to the temperature found in a combustor (about 750° Celsius), based on Incropera and DeWitt (1990).

<sup>c</sup> Average of aluminum and steel.

<sup>d</sup> Source: EPA (1995). “Magazines” used as proxy for magazines/third-class mail; “mixed paper” used as a proxy for the value for office paper and textbooks; “newspapers” used as a proxy for phone books.

<sup>e</sup> Source: Gaines and Stodolsky (1993).

<sup>f</sup> EPA used the higher end of the MMBtu factor for basswood from the USDA-FS. Basswood is a relatively soft wood, so its high-end MMBtu content should be similar to an average factor for all wood types (Fons et al., 1962).

<sup>g</sup> Procter and Redfern, Ltd. and ORTECH International (1993).

<sup>h</sup> Source: IWSA and American Ref-Fuel (personal communication, October 28, 1997). Mixed MSW represents the entire waste stream as disposed of.

<sup>i</sup> Source: Realff, M. (2010).

<sup>j</sup> Tires used as tire-derived fuel substitute for coal in cement kilns and electric utilities; used as a substitute for natural gas in pulp and paper facilities. Therefore, columns (d) through (h) are a weighted average of multiple tire combustion pathways, and are not calculated in the same manner as the other materials and products in the table.

<sup>k</sup> The avoided utility GHG emissions are assumed to equal avoided cement kiln refinery gas combustion, so this factor is not used.

<sup>l</sup> Assumes avoided cement kiln refinery gas combustion.

<sup>m</sup> Bergman and Bowe (2008), Table 3, p. 454. Note that this is in agreement with values already in WARM for lumber and medium-density fiberboard.

<sup>n</sup> Based on average heat rate of U.S. dedicated biomass electricity plants.

### 5.2.4.1 Energy Content

The energy content of each of the combustible materials in WARM is contained in column (b) of Exhibit 5-2. For the energy content of mixed MSW, EPA used a value of 10.0 million Btu (MMBtu) per short ton of mixed MSW combusted, which is a value commonly used in the WTE industry (IWSA and American Ref-Fuel, 1997). This estimate is within the range of values (9.0 to 13.0 MMBtu per ton) reported by FAL (1994) and is slightly higher than the 9.6 MMBtu per ton value reported in EPA’s *MSW Fact Book* (EPA, 1995). For the energy content of RDF, a value of 11.4 MMBtu per ton of RDF combusted was used (Harrington, 1997). This estimate is within the range of values (9.6 to 12.8 MMBtu per ton) reported by the DOE’s National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL, 1992). For the energy content of specific materials in MSW, EPA consulted three sources: (1) EPA’s *MSW Fact Book* (1995), a compilation of data from primary sources, (2) a report by Environment Canada (Procter and Redfern, Ltd. and ORTECH International, 1993), and (3) a report by Argonne National Laboratories (Gaines and Stodolsky, 1993). EPA assumed that the energy contents reported in the first two of these sources were for materials with moisture contents typically found for the materials in MSW (the sources imply this but do not explicitly state it). The Argonne study reports energy content on a dry weight basis.



#### **5.2.4.2 Combustion System Efficiency**

To estimate the combustion system efficiency of mass burn plants, EPA used a net value of 550 kWh generated by mass burn plants per ton of mixed MSW combusted (Zannes, 1997).

To estimate the combustion system efficiency of RDF plants, EPA evaluated three sources: (1) data supplied by an RDF processing facility located in Newport, MN (Harrington, 1997); (2) the Integrated Waste Services Association report, *The 2000 Waste-to-Energy Directory: Year 2000* (IWSA, 2000); and (3) the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL, 1992). EPA used the Newport Processing Facility's reported net value of 572 kWh generated per ton of RDF for two reasons. First, this value is within the range of values reported by the other sources. Second, the Newport Processing Facility provides a complete set of data for evaluating the overall system efficiency of an RDF plant. The net energy value reported accounts for the estimated energy required to process MSW into RDF and the estimated energy consumed by the RDF combustion facility. The dataset includes estimates on the composition and amount of MSW delivered to the processing facility, as well as estimates for the heat value of RDF, the amount of energy required to process MSW into RDF, and the amount of energy used to operate the RDF facility.

Next, EPA considered losses in transmission and distribution of electricity specific to WTE combustion facilities. The U.S. average transmission and distribution ("line") loss rate is about nine percent, although for some facilities or cities, this rate may be lower. According to IWSA and American Ref-Fuel (1997), this rate could be as low as four percent. IWSA supports a five percent line loss rate, and for purposes of this analysis, we assume this value. Using the five percent loss rate, EPA estimated that 523 kWh are delivered per ton of waste combusted at mass burn facilities, and 544 kWh are delivered per ton of waste input at RDF facilities.

EPA then used the value for the delivered kWh per ton of waste combusted to derive the implicit combustion system efficiency (i.e., the percentage of energy in the waste that is ultimately delivered in the form of electricity). To determine this efficiency, we estimate the MMBtu of MSW needed to deliver one kWh of electricity. EPA divided the MMBtu per ton of waste by the delivered kWh per ton of waste to obtain the MMBtu of waste per delivered kWh. The result is 0.0191 MMBtu per kWh for mass burn and 0.0210 MMBtu per kWh for RDF. The physical constant for the energy in one kWh (0.0034 MMBtu) is then divided by the MMBtu of MSW and RDF needed to deliver one kWh, to estimate the total system efficiency at 17.8 percent for mass burn and 16.3 percent for RDF (see Exhibit 5-2, columns (d) and (e)). Note that the total system efficiency is the efficiency of translating the energy content of the fuel into the energy content of delivered electricity. The estimated system efficiencies of 17.8 and 16.3 percent reflect losses in (1) converting energy in the fuel into steam, (2) converting energy in steam into electricity, and (3) delivering electricity.

#### **5.2.4.3 Electric Utility Carbon Emissions Avoided**

To estimate the avoided utility GHG emissions from waste combustion, EPA used "non-baseload" emission factors from EPA's Emissions and Generation Resource Integrated Database (eGRID). EPA made the decision to use non-baseload factors rather than a national average of only fossil-fuel plants<sup>28</sup> because the non-baseload emission rates provide a more accurate estimate of the marginal emissions rate. The non-baseload rates scale emissions from generating units based on their capacity

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<sup>28</sup> While coal accounts for 33 percent of U.S. primary energy consumption—and 56 percent of fossil-fuel consumption—in the electricity sector, these plants may serve as baseload power with marginal changes in electricity supply met by natural gas plants in some areas (EIA, 2018). Natural gas plants have a much lower emissions rate than the coal-dominated national average of fossil-fuel plants.

factor. Plants that run at more than 80 percent capacity are considered “baseload” generation and not included in the “non-baseload” emission factor; a share of generation from plants that run between 80 percent and 20 percent capacity is included in the emission factor based on a “linear relationship,” and all plants with capacity factors below 20 percent are included (E.H. Pechan & Associates, 2006).

In order to capture the regional differences in the emissions rate due to the variation in sources of electricity generation, WARM first uses state-level eGRID non-baseload emission factors and aggregates them into weighted average regional emission factors based on fossil-fuel-only state electricity generation. The geographic regions are based on U.S. Census Bureau-designated areas. Exhibit 5-3 contains a map, prepared by the U.S. Census Bureau, of the nine regions. Exhibit 5-4 shows the national average eGRID emission factor and the factors for each of the nine geographic regions. In addition to the calculated regional non-baseload emission factors, EPA also utilized eGRID’s national non-baseload emission factor to represent the national average non-baseload avoided utility emission factor. The resulting non-baseload regional and national average estimates for utility carbon emissions avoided for each material at mass burn facilities are shown in Exhibit 5-5. Columns (g) and (h), respectively, of Exhibit 5-2 show the national average estimates for mass burn and RDF facilities.

**Exhibit 5-3: Electric Utility Regions Used in WARM**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2009).

**Exhibit 5-4: Avoided Utility Emission Factors by Region**

Region	Emission Factors for Utility-Generated Electricity <sup>a</sup> (MTCO <sub>2</sub> E/Million Btu of Electricity Delivered)
National Average	0.213
Pacific	0.143
Mountain	0.233
West-North Central	0.272
West-South Central	0.199
East-North Central	0.273
East-South Central	0.220
New England	0.141
Middle Atlantic	0.194
South Atlantic	0.206

<sup>a</sup> Includes transmission and distributions losses, which are assumed to be 5.8% (EIA, 2018).

**Exhibit 5-5: Avoided Utility GHG Emissions at Mass Burn Facilities by Region (MTCO<sub>2</sub>E/Short Ton of Material Combusted)**

Material Combusted	National Average	Pacific	Mountain	West-North Central	West-South Central	East-North Central	East-South Central	New England	Middle Atlantic	South Atlantic
Aluminum Cans	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Aluminum Ingot	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Steel Cans	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)
Copper Wire	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Glass	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)
HDPE	1.52	1.02	1.66	21.94	1.42	1.94	1.57	1.01	1.38	1.47
LDPE	1.51	1.02	1.65	1.93	1.41	1.93	1.56	1.00	1.38	1.46
PET	0.80	0.54	0.88	1.03	0.75	1.03	0.83	0.53	0.73	0.78
LLDPE	1.51	1.02	1.66	1.93	1.41	1.94	1.57	1.00	1.38	1.47
PP	1.51	1.02	1.66	1.93	1.41	1.94	1.57	1.00	1.38	1.47
PS	1.37	0.92	1.50	1.74	1.27	1.75	1.41	0.91	1.25	1.432
PVC	0.60	0.40	0.66	0.76	0.56	0.77	0.62	0.40	0.54	0.58
PLA	0.64	0.43	0.70	0.81	0.59	0.81	0.66	0.42	0.58	0.61
Corrugated Containers	0.53	0.36	0.59	0.68	0.50	0.68	0.55	0.35	0.49	0.52
Magazines/Third-Class Mail	0.40	0.27	0.44	0.51	0.37	0.51	0.41	0.26	0.36	0.39
Newspaper	0.60	0.41	0.66	0.77	0.56	0.77	0.62	0.40	0.55	0.58
Office Paper	0.52	0.35	0.57	0.66	0.48	0.66	0.53	0.34	0.47	0.50
Phone Books	0.60	0.41	0.66	0.77	0.56	0.77	0.62	0.40	0.55	0.58
Textbooks	0.52	0.35	0.57	0.66	0.48	0.66	0.53	0.34	0.47	0.50
Dimensional Lumber	0.63	0.42	0.69	0.80	0.59	0.81	0.65	0.42	0.57	0.61
Medium-Density Fiberboard	0.63	0.42	0.69	0.80	0.59	0.81	0.65	0.42	0.57	0.61
Food Waste	0.18	0.12	0.20	0.23	0.17	0.23	0.19	0.12	0.16	0.17
Food Waste (meat only)	0.18	0.12	0.20	0.23	0.17	0.23	0.19	0.12	0.16	0.17
Food Waste (non-meat)	0.18	0.12	0.20	0.23	0.17	0.23	0.19	0.12	0.16	0.17
Beef	0.18	0.12	0.20	0.23	0.17	0.23	0.19	0.12	0.16	0.17
Poultry	0.18	0.12	0.20	0.23	0.17	0.23	0.19	0.12	0.16	0.17
Grains	0.18	0.12	0.20	0.23	0.17	0.23	0.19	0.12	0.16	0.17
Bread	0.18	0.12	0.20	0.23	0.17	0.23	0.19	0.12	0.16	0.217
Fruits and Vegetables	0.18	0.12	0.20	0.23	0.17	0.23	0.19	0.12	0.16	0.17
Dairy Products	0.18	0.12	0.20	0.23	0.17	0.23	0.19	0.12	0.16	0.17

Material Combusted	National Average	Pacific	Mountain	West-North Central	West-South Central	East-North Central	East-South Central	New England	Middle Atlantic	South Atlantic
Yard Trimmings	0.21	0.14	0.23	0.27	0.20	0.27	0.22	0.14	0.19	0.21
Mixed MSW	0.38	0.26	0.42	0.48	0.35	0.49	0.39	0.25	0.35	0.37
Carpet	0.58	0.39	0.63	0.74	0.54	0.74	0.60	0.38	0.53	0.56
Desktop CPUs	0.12	0.08	0.13	0.15	0.11	0.15	0.12	0.08	0.11	0.11
Portable Electronic Devices	0.12	0.08	0.13	0.15	0.11	0.15	0.12	0.08	0.11	0.11
Flat-panel Displays	0.12	0.08	0.13	0.15	0.11	0.15	0.12	0.08	0.11	0.11
CRT Displays	0.12	0.08	0.13	0.15	0.11	0.15	0.12	0.08	0.11	0.11
Electronic Peripherals	0.12	0.08	0.13	0.15	0.11	0.15	0.12	0.08	0.11	0.11
Hard-copy Devices	0.12	0.08	0.13	0.15	0.11	0.15	0.12	0.08	0.11	0.11
Mixed Electronics	0.12	0.08	0.13	0.15	0.11	0.15	0.12	0.08	0.11	0.11
Tires <sup>a</sup>	1.57	1.57	1.57	1.57	1.57	1.57	1.57	1.57	1.57	1.57
Asphalt Shingles <sup>b</sup>	1.05	1.05	1.05	1.05	1.05	1.05	1.05	1.05	1.05	1.05
Vinyl Flooring	0.60	0.40	0.66	0.76	0.56	0.77	0.62	0.40	0.54	0.58
Wood Flooring	0.82	0.56	0.90	1.05	0.77	1.06	0.85	0.55	0.75	0.80

Note that the "National Average" column is also represented in column (g) of Exhibit 5-2.

<sup>a</sup> Assumes weighted average avoided utility GHG emissions for multiple tire combustion pathways.

<sup>b</sup> Assumes avoided cement kiln refinery gas combustion.

### 5.2.5 Avoided CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions Due to Steel Recycling

WARM estimates the avoided CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from increased steel recycling made possible by steel recovery from WTE plants for steel cans, mixed MSW, electronics, and tires. Most MSW combusted with energy recovery in the United States is combusted at WTE plants that recover ferrous metals (e.g., iron and steel).<sup>29</sup> Note that EPA does not credit increased recycling of nonferrous materials due to a lack of data on the proportions of those materials being recovered. Therefore, the result tends to overestimate net GHG emissions from combustion.

For mixed MSW, EPA estimated the amount of steel recovered per ton of mixed MSW combusted, based on (1) the amount of MSW combusted in the United States, and (2) the amount of steel recovered, post-combustion. Ferrous metals are recovered at approximately 98 percent of WTE facilities in the United States (Bahor, 2010) and at five RDF processing facilities that do not generate power on-site. These facilities recovered a total of nearly 706,000 short tons per year of ferrous metals in 2004 (IWSA, 2004). By dividing 706,000 short tons (total U.S. steel recovery at combustors) by total U.S. combustion of MSW, which is 28.5 million tons (Van Haaren al., 2010), EPA estimated that 0.02 short tons of steel are recovered per short ton of mixed MSW combusted (as a national average).

For steel cans, EPA first estimated the national average proportion of steel cans entering WTE plants that would be recovered. As noted above, approximately 98 percent of MSW destined for combustion goes to facilities with a ferrous recovery system. At these plants, approximately 90 percent of steel is recovered (Bahor, 2010). EPA multiplied these percentages to estimate the weight of steel cans recovered per ton of MSW combusted—about 0.88 tons recovered per ton combusted.

Finally, to estimate the avoided CO<sub>2</sub> emissions due to increased recycling of steel, EPA multiplied (1) the weight of steel recovered by (2) the avoided CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per ton of steel recovered. The

<sup>29</sup> EPA did not consider any recovery of materials from the MSW stream that might occur before MSW is delivered to the combustor. EPA considered such prior recovery to be unrelated to the combustion operation—unlike the recovery of steel from combustor ash, an activity that is an integral part of the operation of many combustors.

estimated avoided CO<sub>2</sub> emissions results are in column (d) of Exhibit 5-6. For more information on the GHG benefits of recycling, see the [Recycling](#) and [Metals](#) chapters.

**Exhibit 5-6: Avoided GHG Emissions Due to Increased Steel Recovery from MSW at WTE Facilities**

(a) Material Combusted	(b) Short Tons of Steel Recovered per Short Ton of Waste Combusted (Short Tons)	(c) Avoided CO <sub>2</sub> Emissions per Short Ton of Steel Recovered (MTCO <sub>2</sub> E/Short Ton)	(d) Avoided CO <sub>2</sub> Emissions per Short Ton of Waste Combusted (MTCO <sub>2</sub> E/Short Ton) <sup>a</sup>
Aluminum Cans	–	–	–
Aluminum Ingot	–	–	–
Steel Cans	0.88	1.83	1.62
Copper Wire	–	–	–
Glass	–	–	–
HDPE	–	–	–
LDPE	–	–	–
PET	–	–	–
LLDPE	–	–	–
PP	–	–	–
PS	–	–	–
PVC	–	–	–
PLA	–	–	–
Corrugated Containers	–	–	–
Magazines/Third-Class Mail	–	–	–
Newspaper	–	–	–
Office Paper	–	–	–
Phone Books	–	–	–
Textbooks	–	–	–
Dimensional Lumber	–	–	–
Medium-Density Fiberboard	–	–	–
Food Waste	–	–	–
Food Waste (meat only)	–	–	–
Food Waste (non-meat)	–	–	–
Beef	–	–	–
Poultry	–	–	–
Grains	–	–	–
Bread	–	–	–
Fruits and Vegetables	–	–	–
Dairy Products	–	–	–
Yard Trimmings	–	–	–
Mixed Paper (general)	–	–	–
Mixed Paper (primarily residential)	–	–	–
Mixed Paper (primarily from offices)	–	–	–
Mixed Metals	–	–	-1.04
Mixed Plastics	–	–	–
Mixed Recyclables	–	–	-0.04
Mixed Organics	–	–	–
Mixed MSW	0.02	1.83	0.04
Carpet	–	–	–
Desktop CPUs	0.52	1.83	0.95
Portable Electronic Devices	0.06	1.83	0.12
Flat-panel Displays	0.33	1.83	0.60
CRT Displays	0.04	1.83	0.08
Electronic Peripherals	0.02	1.83	0.03
Hard-copy Devices	0.33	1.83	0.60
Mixed Electronics	0.27	1.83	0.50

(a) Material Combusted	(b) Short Tons of Steel Recovered per Short Ton of Waste Combusted (Short Tons)	(c) Avoided CO <sub>2</sub> Emissions per Short Ton of Steel Recovered (MTCO <sub>2</sub> E/Short Ton)	(d) Avoided CO <sub>2</sub> Emissions per Short Ton of Waste Combusted (MTCO <sub>2</sub> E/Short Ton) <sup>a</sup>
Clay Bricks	–	–	–
Concrete	–	–	–
Fly Ash	–	–	–
Tires	0.06	1.80	0.10
Asphalt Concrete	–	–	–
Asphalt Shingles	–	–	–
Drywall	–	–	–
Fiberglass Insulation	–	–	–
Vinyl Flooring	–	–	–
Wood Flooring	–	–	–

– = Zero emissions.

Note that totals may not sum due to independent rounding, and more digits may be displayed than are significant.

<sup>a</sup> The value in column (d) is a national average and is weighted to reflect 90 percent recovery at the 98 percent of facilities that recover ferrous metals.

<sup>b</sup> Assumes that only 68 percent of facilities that use TDF recover ferrous metals.

### 5.3 RESULTS

The national average results of this analysis are shown in Exhibit 5-7. The results from the last column of Exhibit 5-1, the last two columns of Exhibit 5-2, and the last column of Exhibit 5-6 are shown in columns (b) through (e) in Exhibit 5-7. The net GHG emissions from combustion of each material at mass burn and RDF facilities are shown in columns (f) and (g), respectively. These net values represent the gross GHG emissions (column (b)), minus the avoided GHG emissions (columns (c), (d), and (e)). As stated earlier, these estimates of net GHG emissions are expressed for combustion in absolute terms, and are not values relative to another waste management option, although they must be used comparatively, as all WARM emission factors must be. They are expressed in terms of short tons of waste input (i.e., tons of waste prior to processing).

**Exhibit 5-7: Net National Average GHG Emissions from Combustion at WTE Facilities**

(a) Material Combusted	(b) Gross GHG Emissions per Ton Combusted (MTCO <sub>2</sub> E/ Short Ton)	(c) Avoided Utility GHG Emissions per Ton Combusted at Mass Burn Facilities (MTCO <sub>2</sub> E / Short Ton) <sup>a</sup>	(d) Avoided CO <sub>2</sub> Emissions per Ton Combusted Due to Steel Recovery (MTCO <sub>2</sub> E / Short Ton)	(e = b – c – d) Net GHG Emissions from Combustion at Mass Burn Facilities (MTCO <sub>2</sub> E / Short Ton)
Aluminum Cans	0.01	(0.03)	–	0.03
Aluminum Ingot	0.01	(0.03)	–	0.03
Steel Cans	0.01	(0.02)	1.62	(1.59)
Copper Wire	0.01	(0.02)	–	0.03
Glass	0.01	(0.02)	–	0.03
HDPE	2.80	1.52	–	1.29
LDPE	2.80	1.51	–	1.29
PET	2.05	0.80	–	1.24
LLDPE	2.80	1.51	–	1.29
PP	2.80	1.51	–	1.29
PS	3.02	1.37	–	1.65
PVC	1.26	0.60	–	0.66
PLA	0.01	0.64	–	(0.63)
Corrugated Containers	0.05	0.53	–	(0.49)
Magazines/Third-Class Mail	0.05	0.40	–	(0.35)
Newspaper	0.05	0.60	–	(0.56)

(a) Material Combusted	(b) Gross GHG Emissions per Ton Combusted (MTCO <sub>2</sub> E/ Short Ton)	(c) Avoided Utility GHG Emissions per Ton Combusted at Mass Burn Facilities (MTCO <sub>2</sub> E / Short Ton) <sup>a</sup>	(d) Avoided CO <sub>2</sub> Emissions per Ton Combusted Due to Steel Recovery (MTCO <sub>2</sub> E / Short Ton)	(e = b - c - d) Net GHG Emissions from Combustion at Mass Burn Facilities (MTCO <sub>2</sub> E / Short Ton)
Office Paper	0.05	0.52	–	(0.47)
Phone Books	0.05	0.60	–	(0.56)
Textbooks	0.05	0.52	–	(0.47)
Dimensional Lumber	0.05	0.63	–	(0.58)
Medium-Density Fiberboard	0.05	0.63	–	(0.58)
Food Waste	0.05	0.18	–	(0.13)
Food Waste (meat only)	0.05	0.18	–	(0.13)
Food Waste (non-meat)	0.05	0.18	–	(0.13)
Beef	0.05	0.18	–	(0.13)
Poultry	0.05	0.18	–	(0.13)
Grains	0.05	0.18	–	(0.13)
Bread	0.05	0.18	–	(0.13)
Fruits and Vegetables	0.05	0.18	–	(0.13)
Dairy Products	0.05	0.18	–	(0.13)
Yard Trimmings	0.05	0.21	–	(0.17)
Grass	0.05	0.21	–	(0.17)
Leaves	0.05	0.21	–	(0.17)
Branches	0.05	0.21	–	(0.17)
Mixed Paper (general) <sup>b</sup>	0.05	0.54	–	(0.49)
Mixed Paper (primarily residential) <sup>b</sup>	0.05	0.53	–	(0.49)
Mixed Paper (primarily from offices) <sup>b</sup>	0.05	0.49	–	(0.45)
Mixed Metals	0.01	-0.02	1.05	(1.02)
Mixed Plastics	2.35	1.09	–	1.26
Mixed Recyclables	0.11	0.50	0.04	(0.42)
Mixed Organics	0.05	0.20	–	(0.15)
Mixed MSW	0.43	0.38	0.04	0.01
Carpet	1.68	0.58	–	1.10
Desktop CPUs	0.40	0.12	0.95	(0.66)
Portable Electronic Device	0.89	0.12	0.12	0.65
Flat-panel Displays	0.74	0.12	0.60	0.03
CRT Displays	0.64	0.12	0.08	0.45
Electronic Peripherals	2.23	0.12	0.03	2.08
Hard-copy Devices	1.92	0.12	0.60	1.20
Mixed Electronics	0.96	0.12	0.50	0.34
Clay Bricks	NA	NA	NA	NA
Concrete	NA	NA	NA	NA
Fly Ash	NA	NA	NA	NA
Tires <sup>c</sup>	2.21	1.57	0.13	0.50
Asphalt Concrete	NA	NA	NA	NA
Asphalt Shingles	0.70	1.05 <sup>m</sup>	–	(0.35)
Drywall	NA	NA	–	NA
Fiberglass Insulation	NA	NA	–	NA
Vinyl Flooring	0.29	0.60	–	(0.31)
Wood Flooring	0.08	0.82	–	(0.74)

Note that totals may not sum due to independent rounding, and more digits may be displayed than are significant.

<sup>a</sup> The values in this column represent the national average avoided utility GHG emissions. WARM also allows users to use region-specific avoided utility emissions, which are contained in Exhibit 5-5.

<sup>b</sup> The summary values for mixed paper are based on the proportions of the four paper types (corrugated containers, magazines/third-class mail, newspaper, and office paper) that constitute the different “mixed paper” definitions.

<sup>c</sup> Tires used as TDF substitute for coal in cement kilns and utility boilers and as a substitute for natural gas, coal, and biomass in pulp and paper facilities.

In the Excel version of WARM, the user can select the state where the waste is being disposed of to determine the combustion emissions based on regional avoided utility emission factors. This functionality is not available in the online version of WARM, which only allows for national average emissions calculations.

Net GHG emissions are estimated to be negative for all biogenic sources of carbon (paper and wood products, organics) because CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from these sources are not counted, as discussed earlier.

As shown in Exhibit 5-7, combustion of plastics results in substantial net GHG emissions. This result is primarily because of the high content of non-biomass carbon in plastics. Also, when combustion of plastics results in electricity generation, the utility carbon emissions avoided (due to displaced utility fossil fuel combustion) are much lower than the carbon emissions from the combustion of plastics. This result is largely due to the lower system efficiency of WTE plants compared with electric utility plants. Recovery of ferrous metals at combustors results in negative net GHG emissions for steel cans, due to the increased steel recycling made possible by ferrous metal recovery at WTE plants. Combustion of mixed MSW results in slightly negative GHG emissions because of the high proportion of biogenic carbon and steel.

#### 5.4 LIMITATIONS

The certainty of the analysis presented in this chapter is limited by the reliability of the various data elements used. The most significant limitations are as follows:

- Combustion system efficiency of WTE plants may be improving. If efficiency improves, more utility CO<sub>2</sub> will be displaced per ton of waste combusted (assuming no change in utility emissions per kWh), and the net GHG emissions from combustion of MSW will decrease.
- Data for the RDF analysis were provided by the Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance and were obtained from a single RDF processing facility and a separate RDF combustion facility. Research indicates that each RDF processing and combustion facility is different. For example, some RDF combustion facilities may generate steam for sale off-site, which can affect overall system efficiency. In addition, the amount of energy required to process MSW into RDF and the amount of energy used to operate RDF combustion facilities can be difficult to quantify and can vary among facilities on daily, seasonal and annual bases. This is one of the reasons that RDF factors are not included in WARM.
- The reported ranges for N<sub>2</sub>O emissions were broad. In some cases, the high end of the range was 10 times the low end of the range. Research has indicated that N<sub>2</sub>O emissions vary with the type of waste burned. Thus, the average value used for mixed MSW and for all MSW components should be interpreted as approximate values.
- For mixed MSW, the study assumed that all carbon in textiles is from synthetic fibers derived from petrochemicals (whereas, in fact, some textiles are made from cotton, wool and other natural fibers). Because EPA assumed that all carbon in textiles is non-biogenic, all of the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from combustion of textiles as GHG emissions were counted. This assumption will slightly overstate the net GHG emissions from combustion of mixed MSW, but the magnitude of the error is small because textiles represent only a small fraction of the MSW stream. Similarly, the MSW category of “rubber and leather” contains some biogenic carbon from leather and



natural rubber. By not considering this small amount of biogenic carbon, the analysis slightly overstates the GHG emissions from MSW combustion.

- Because the makeup of a given community's mixed MSW may vary from the national average, the energy content also may vary from the national average energy content used in this analysis. For example, MSW from communities with a higher- or lower-than-average recycling rate may have a different energy content, and MSW with more than the average proportion of dry leaves and branches will have a higher energy content.
- In this analysis, EPA used the national average recovery rate for steel. Where waste is sent to a WTE plant with steel recovery, the net GHG emissions for steel cans will be slightly lower (i.e., more negative). Where waste is sent to a WTE plant without steel recovery, the net GHG emissions for steel cans will be the same as for aluminum cans (i.e., close to zero). EPA did not credit increased recycling of nonferrous materials, because of a lack of information on the proportions of those materials. This assumption tends to result in overstated net GHG emissions from combustion.
- This analysis uses the "non-baseload" emission factors for electricity as the proxy for fuel displaced at the margin when WTE plants displace utility electricity. These non-baseload emission factors vary depending on the state where the waste is assumed to be combusted. If some other fuel or mix of fuels is displaced at the margin (e.g., a more coal-heavy fuel mix), the avoided utility CO<sub>2</sub> would be different.

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## 6 LANDFILLING

This chapter presents an overview of landfilling as a waste management strategy in relation to the development of material-specific emission factors for EPA's Waste Reduction Model (WARM). Estimates of the net greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from landfilling most of the materials considered in WARM and several categories of mixed waste streams (e.g., mixed paper, mixed recyclables, and mixed municipal solid waste (MSW)) are included in the chapter.

### 6.1 A SUMMARY OF THE GHG IMPLICATIONS OF LANDFILLING

When food waste, yard trimmings, paper, and wood are landfilled, anaerobic bacteria degrade the materials, producing methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) and carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>). CH<sub>4</sub> is counted as an anthropogenic GHG because, even if it is derived from sustainably harvested biogenic sources, degradation would not result in CH<sub>4</sub> emissions if not for deposition in landfills. The CO<sub>2</sub> produced after landfilling is not counted as a GHG because it is considered part of the natural carbon cycle of growth and decomposition; for more information, see the text box on biogenic carbon in the [WARM Background and Overview](#) chapter. The other materials in WARM either do not contain carbon or do not biodegrade measurably in anaerobic conditions, and therefore do not generate any CH<sub>4</sub>.

In addition to carbon emissions, some of the carbon in these materials (i.e., food waste, yard trimmings, paper, and wood) is stored in the landfill because these materials are not completely decomposed by anaerobic bacteria. Because this carbon storage would not normally occur under natural conditions (virtually all of the biodegradable material would degrade to CO<sub>2</sub>, completing the photosynthesis/respiration cycle), this is counted as an anthropogenic sink. However, carbon in plastics and rubber that remains in the landfill is not counted as stored carbon because it is of fossil origin. Fossil carbon (e.g., petroleum, coal) is already considered "stored" in its natural state; converting it to plastic or rubber and putting it in a landfill only moves the carbon from one storage site to another.

EPA developed separate estimates of emissions from (1) landfills without gas recovery systems, (2) those that flare CH<sub>4</sub>, (3) those that combust CH<sub>4</sub> for energy recovery, and (4) the national average mix of these three categories. The national average emission estimate accounts for the extent to which CH<sub>4</sub> will not be managed at some landfills, flared at some landfills, and combusted onsite for energy recovery at others.<sup>30</sup> The assumed mix of the three landfill categories that make up the national average for construction and demolition (C&D) materials and all other material types in WARM are presented in Exhibit 6-1. These estimates are based on the amount of CH<sub>4</sub> generated by U.S. landfills, as reported in Subpart HH and TT from EPA's Greenhouse Gas Reporting Program (EPA, 2018a), and the type of collection system from EPA's Landfill Methane Outreach Program (LMOP) (EPA, 2018b), as summarized in Exhibit 6-2. For C&D materials, EPA assumes that roughly 3% of waste is landfilled in a municipal landfill, while the remaining 97% waste is landfilled in a C&D landfill, which recovers landfill gas (LFG) at a rate that is consistent with industrial landfills (EPA, 2019; EPA, 2017). For all other materials, EPA assumes LFG recovery rates that are consistent with municipal landfills.

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<sup>30</sup> Although gas from some landfills is piped to an offsite power plant and combusted there, for the purposes of WARM, the simplifying assumption was that all gas for energy recovery was combusted onsite. This assumption was made due to the lack of information about the frequency of offsite power generation, piping distances, and losses from pipelines.

**Exhibit 6-1: Percentage of CH<sub>4</sub> Generated under the National Average**

Material Type	Percentage of CH <sub>4</sub> from Landfills without LFG Recovery	Percentage of CH <sub>4</sub> from Landfills with LFG Recovery and Flaring only	CH <sub>4</sub> from Landfills with LFG Recovery and Electricity Generation (%)
C&D Material	96%	2%	2%
MSW Materials	8%	26%	66%

**Exhibit 6-2: Percentage of CH<sub>4</sub> Generated from Each Type of Landfill**

Landfill Type	Percentage of CH <sub>4</sub> from Landfills without LFG Recovery	Percentage of CH <sub>4</sub> from Landfills with LFG Recovery and Flaring only	CH <sub>4</sub> from Landfills with LFG Recovery and Electricity Generation (%) <sup>a</sup>
Industrial Landfill	98%	2%	–
Municipal Landfill	8%	26%	66%

<sup>a</sup> The LMOP database indicates landfills that have active landfill-gas-to-energy (LFGTE) systems. However, it does not report the percentage of LFG recovered at these facilities for energy generation versus the percentage of LFG recovered for flaring. In WARM, all LFG generation at landfills with LFGTE systems is assumed to be recovered for energy. Therefore, this approach likely underestimates the total percentage of LFG generation that is flared in the U.S. by not accounting for LFG flaring at landfills with LFGTE systems.

## 6.2 CALCULATING THE GHG IMPACTS OF LANDFILLING

The landfilling emission factors are made up of the following components:

1. CH<sub>4</sub> emissions from anaerobic decomposition of biogenic carbon compounds;
2. Transportation CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from landfilling equipment;
3. Biogenic carbon stored in the landfill; and
4. CO<sub>2</sub> emissions avoided through landfill gas-to-energy projects.

As mentioned above, WARM does not calculate CH<sub>4</sub> emissions, stored carbon, or CO<sub>2</sub> avoided for materials containing only fossil carbon (e.g., plastics, rubber). These materials have net landfilling emissions that are very low because they include only the transportation-related emissions from landfilling equipment. Some materials (e.g., newspaper, dimensional lumber) result in net storage (i.e., carbon storage exceeds CH<sub>4</sub> plus transportation energy emissions) at all landfills, regardless of whether gas recovery is present, while others (e.g., food waste) result in net emissions regardless of landfill gas collection and recovery practices. Whether the remaining materials result in net storage or net emissions depends on the landfill gas recovery scenario.

### 6.2.1 Carbon Stocks and Flows in Landfills

Exhibit 6-3 shows the carbon flows within a landfill system. Carbon entering the landfill can have one of several fates: exit as CH<sub>4</sub>, exit as CO<sub>2</sub>, exit as volatile organic compounds (VOCs), exit dissolved in leachate, or remain stored in the landfill.<sup>31</sup>

After entering landfills, a portion of the biodegradable material decomposes and eventually is transformed into landfill gas and/or leachate. Aerobic bacteria initially decompose the waste until the available oxygen is consumed. This stage usually lasts less than a week and is followed by the anaerobic acid state, in which carboxylic acids accumulate, the pH decreases, and some cellulose and hemicellulose decomposition occurs. Finally, during the methanogenic state, bacteria further decompose the biodegradable material into CH<sub>4</sub> and CO<sub>2</sub>.

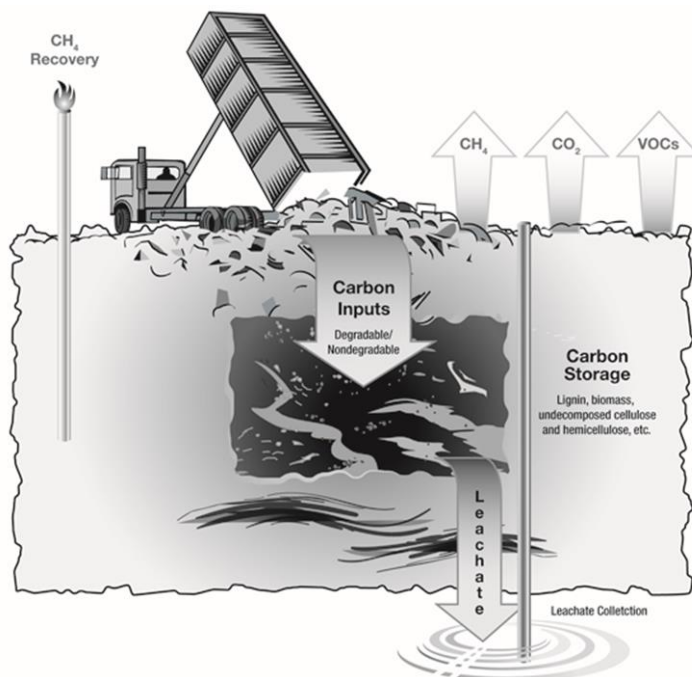
<sup>31</sup> The exhibit and much of the ensuing discussion are taken directly from Freed et al. (2004).

The rate of decomposition in landfills is affected by a number of factors, including: (1) waste composition; (2) factors influencing microbial growth (moisture, available nutrients, pH, temperature); and (3) whether the operation of the landfill retards or enhances waste decomposition. Most studies have shown that the amount of moisture in the waste, which can vary widely within a single landfill, is a critical factor in the rate of decomposition (Barlaz et al., 1990). Due to this fact, the emission factors presented in WARM are per wet ton of waste.

Among the research conducted on the various components of the landfill carbon system, much to date has focused on the transformation of landfill carbon into CH<sub>4</sub>. This interest has been spurred by a number of factors, including EPA's 1996 rule requiring large landfills to control landfill gas emissions (40 Code of Federal Regulations Part 60, Subparts Cc and WWWW), the importance of CH<sub>4</sub> emissions in GHG inventories, and the market for CH<sub>4</sub> as an energy source. CH<sub>4</sub> production occurs in the methanogenic stage of decomposition, as methanogenic bacteria break down the fermentation products from earlier decomposition processes. Since CH<sub>4</sub> emissions result from waste decomposition, the quantity and duration of the emissions is dependent on the same factors that influence waste degradability (e.g., waste composition, moisture). The CH<sub>4</sub> portion of each material type's emission factor is discussed further in section 6.2.2.

Carbon dioxide is produced in the initial aerobic stage and in the anaerobic acid stage of decomposition. However, relatively little research has been conducted to quantify CO<sub>2</sub> emissions during these stages. Emissions during the aerobic stage are generally assumed to be a small proportion of total organic carbon inputs, and a screening-level analysis indicates that less than one percent of carbon is likely to be emitted through this pathway (Freed et al., 2004). Once the methanogenic stage of decomposition begins, landfill gas *as generated* is composed of approximately 50 percent CH<sub>4</sub> and 50 percent CO<sub>2</sub> (Bingemer and Crutzen, 1987). However, landfill gas *as collected* generally has a higher CH<sub>4</sub> concentration than CO<sub>2</sub> concentration (sometimes as much as a 60 percent: 40 percent ratio), because some of the CO<sub>2</sub> is dissolved in the leachate as part of the carbonate system (CO<sub>2</sub> ↔ H<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> ↔ HCO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup> ↔ CO<sub>3</sub><sup>2-</sup>).

**Exhibit 6-3: Landfill Carbon Mass Balance**



Source: Freed et al. (2004).

To date, very little research has been conducted on the role of VOC emissions in the landfill carbon mass balance. Given the thousands of compounds entering the landfill environment, tracking the biochemistry by which these compounds ultimately are converted to VOC is a complex undertaking. Existing research indicates that ethane, limonene, *n*-decane, *p*-dichlorobenzene, and toluene may be among the most abundant landfill VOCs (Eklund et al., 1998). Hartog (2003) reported non-CH<sub>4</sub> volatile organic compound concentrations in landfill gas at a bioreactor site in Iowa, averaging 1,700 parts per million (ppm) carbon by volume in 2001 and 925 ppm carbon by volume in 2002. If the VOC concentrations in landfill gas are generally of the order of magnitude of 1,000 ppm, VOCs would have a small role in the overall carbon balance, as concentrations of CH<sub>4</sub> and CO<sub>2</sub> will both be hundreds of times larger.

Leachate is produced as water percolates through landfills. Factors affecting leachate formation include the quantity of water entering the landfill, waste composition, and the degree of decomposition. Because it may contain materials capable of contaminating groundwater, leachate (and the carbon it contains) is typically collected and treated before being released to the environment, where it eventually degrades into CO<sub>2</sub>. However, leachate is increasingly being recycled into the landfill as a means of inexpensive disposal and to promote decomposition, increasing the mass of biodegradable materials collected by the system and consequently enhancing aqueous degradation (Chan et al., 2002; Warith et al., 1999). Although a significant body of literature exists on landfill leachate formation, little research is available on the carbon implications of this process. Based on a screening analysis, Freed et al. (2004) found that loss as leachate may occur for less than one percent of total carbon inputs to landfills.

In mass balance terms, carbon storage can be characterized as the carbon that remains after accounting for the carbon exiting the system as landfill gas or dissolved in leachate. On a dry weight basis, municipal refuse contains 30–50 percent cellulose, 7–12 percent hemicellulose and 15–28 percent lignin (Hilger and Barlaz, 2001). Although the degradation of cellulose and hemicellulose in landfills is well documented, lignin does not degrade to a significant extent under anaerobic conditions (Colberg, 1988). Landfills in effect store some of carbon from the cellulose and hemicellulose and all of the carbon from the lignin that is buried initially. The amount of storage will vary with environmental conditions in the landfill; pH and moisture content have been identified as the two most important variables controlling decomposition (Barlaz et al., 1990). These variables and their effects on each material type's emission factor are discussed further below.

## **6.2.2 Estimating Emissions from Landfills**

As discussed in section 6.2.1, when biodegradable materials such as wood products, food wastes, and yard trimmings are placed into a landfill, a fraction of the carbon within these materials degrades into CH<sub>4</sub> emissions. The quantity and timing of CH<sub>4</sub> emissions released from the landfill depends upon three factors: (1) how much of the original material decays into CH<sub>4</sub>, (2) how readily the material decays under different landfill moisture conditions, and (3) landfill gas collection practices. This section describes how these three factors are addressed in WARM.

### **6.2.2.1 Methane Generation and Landfill Carbon Storage**

The first step is to determine the amount of carbon contained in degradable materials that is emitted from the landfill as CH<sub>4</sub>, and the amount that remains in long-term storage within the landfill. Although a large body of research exists on CH<sub>4</sub> generation from mixed solid wastes, only a few investigators—most notably Dr. Morton Barlaz and colleagues at North Carolina State University—have measured the behavior of specific waste wood, paper, food waste, and yard trimming components. The

results of their experiments yield data on the inputs—specifically the initial carbon contents, CH<sub>4</sub> generation, and carbon stored—that are required for calculating material-specific emission factors for WARM.

Barlaz (1998) developed a series of laboratory experiments designed to measure biodegradation of these materials in a simulated landfill environment, in conditions designed to promote decomposition (i.e., by providing ample moisture and nutrients). Each waste component (e.g., grass, branches, leaves, paper) was dried; analyzed for cellulose, hemicellulose, and lignin content; weighed; placed in two-liter plastic containers (i.e., reactors); and allowed to decompose anaerobically under moist conditions (Eleazer et al., 1997). At the end of the experiment, the contents of the reactors were dried, weighed, and analyzed for cellulose, hemicellulose, lignin, and (in the case of food waste only) protein content. The carbon in these residual components is assumed to represent carbon that would remain undegraded over the long term in landfills: that is, it would be stored.

Based on these components, Dr. Barlaz estimated the initial biogenic carbon content of each waste material as a percent of dry matter. For some materials, the carbon content estimates have been updated to reflect more recent studies or to better reflect changes in material composition in recent years. Exhibit 6-4 shows the initial carbon contents of the wastes analyzed by Barlaz (1998) and Wang et al. (2011).

**Exhibit 6-4: Initial Biogenic Carbon Content of Materials Tested in Barlaz (1998) and Wang et al. (2011)**

Material	Initial Biogenic Carbon Content, % of Dry Matter	Source
Corrugated Containers	47%	Barlaz (1998)
Newspaper	49%	Barlaz (1998)
Office Paper	32%	Barlaz (1998) <sup>a</sup>
Coated Paper	26%	Barlaz (1998)
Food Waste - Vegetable	48%	Barlaz (1998)
Food Waste - Non-Vegetable	57%	Barlaz (1998)
Grass	45%	Barlaz (1998)
Leaves	46%	Barlaz (1998)
Branches	49%	Barlaz (1998)
Mixed MSW	42%	Barlaz (1998)
Gypsum Board	5%	Barlaz (1998)
Dimensional Lumber	49%	Wang et al. (2011)
Medium-density Fiberboard	44%	Wang et al. (2011)
Wood Flooring <sup>b</sup>	46%	Wang et al. (2011)

<sup>a</sup> Based on 2014 discussions with Dr. Morton Barlaz, the carbon content of office paper has been updated to account for an average calcium carbonate (CaCO<sub>3</sub>) content of 20 percent in office paper in recent years.

<sup>b</sup> Based on an average of carbon content values for red oak and plywood in Wang et al. (2011).

The principal stocks and flows in the landfill carbon balance are:

- Initial carbon content (Initial C);
- Carbon output as CH<sub>4</sub> (CH<sub>4</sub><sup>C</sup>);
- Carbon output as CO<sub>2</sub> (CO<sub>2</sub><sup>C</sup>); and
- Residual carbon (i.e., landfill carbon storage, LF<sup>C</sup>).



The initial carbon content, along with the other results from the Barlaz (1998), Wang et al. (2013), Wang et al. (2011), and Levis et al. (2013) experiments are used to estimate each material type's emission factor in WARM. The Barlaz (1998), Wang et al. (2013), Wang et al. (2011), and Levis et al. (2013) experiments did not capture CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the carbon balance; however, in a simple system where the only carbon fates are CH<sub>4</sub>, CO<sub>2</sub> and carbon storage, the carbon balance can be described as

$$\text{CH}_4^{\text{C}} + \text{CO}_2^{\text{C}} + \text{LF}^{\text{C}} = \text{Initial C}$$

If the only decomposition is anaerobic, then  $\text{CH}_4^{\text{C}} = \text{CO}_2^{\text{C}}$ .<sup>32</sup> Thus, the carbon balance can be expressed as

$$= \text{Initial C} \times 2 \times \text{CH}_4^{\text{C}} + \text{LF}^{\text{C}} = \text{Initial C}$$

Exhibit 6-5 shows the measured experimental values, in terms of the percentage of initial carbon for each of the materials analyzed, the implied landfill gas yield, and the sum of outputs as a percentage of initial carbon (Barlaz, 1998; Wang et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2011; Levis et al., 2013). As the sum of the outputs shows, the balance between carbon outputs and carbon inputs generally was not perfect. This imbalance is attributable to measurement uncertainty in the analytic techniques.

**Exhibit 6-5: Experimental Values for CH<sub>4</sub> Yield and Carbon Storage<sup>a</sup>**

(a) Material	(b) Measured CH <sub>4</sub> Yield as a % of Initial Carbon	(c) Implied Yield of Landfill Gas (CH <sub>4</sub> +CO <sub>2</sub> ) as a Proportion of Initial Carbon (c = 2 × b)	(d) Measured Proportion of Initial Carbon Stored	(e) Output as % of Initial Carbon (e = c + d)
Corrugated Containers	22%	45%	55%	100%
Newspaper	8%	16%	86%	102%
Office Paper	44%	88%	124%	212%
Coated Paper	13%	26%	79%	100%
Food Waste - Non-Vegetable	35%	70%	30%	100%
Grass	23%	46%	53%	100%
Leaves	8%	15%	85%	100%
Branches	12%	23%	77%	100%
Mixed MSW	16%	32%	19%	50%
Gypsum Board	0%	0%	55%	55%
Dimensional Lumber	1%	3%	88%	91%
Medium-density Fiberboard	1%	1%	84%	85%
Wood Flooring <sup>b</sup>	2%	4%	96%	100%

<sup>a</sup> The CH<sub>4</sub>, CO<sub>2</sub>, and carbon stored from these experiments represents only the biogenic carbon in each material type.

<sup>b</sup> Based on an average of carbon content values for red oak and plywood in Wang et al. (2011).

To calculate the WARM emission factors, adjustments were made to the measured values so that exactly 100 percent of the initial carbon would be accounted for. After consultation with Dr. Barlaz, the following approach was adopted to account for exactly 100 percent of the initial carbon:

- For most materials where the total carbon output is less than the total carbon input (e.g., corrugated containers, office paper, food waste, grass, leaves), the “missing” carbon was

<sup>32</sup> The emissions ratio of CH<sub>4</sub> to CO<sub>2</sub> is 1:1 for carbohydrates (e.g., cellulose, hemicellulose). For proteins, the ratio is 1.65 CH<sub>4</sub> per 1.55 CO<sub>2</sub>; for protein, it is C<sub>3.2</sub>H<sub>5</sub>ON<sub>0.86</sub> (Barlaz et al., 1989). Given the predominance of carbohydrates, for all practical purposes, the overall ratio is 1:1.

assumed to be emitted as equal quantities of  $\text{CH}_4^C$  and  $\text{CO}_2^C$ . In these cases (corrugated containers, office paper, food waste, grass, leaves), the  $\text{CH}_4^C$  was increased with respect to the measured values as follows:

$$\frac{\text{Initial C-LF}^C}{2} = \text{CH}_4^C$$

This calculation assumes that  $\text{CO}_2^C = \text{CH}_4^C$ . In essence, the adjustment approach was to increase landfill gas production, as suggested by Dr. Barlaz.

For coated paper, newspaper, and wood flooring, where carbon outputs were greater than initial carbon, the measurements of initial carbon content and  $\text{CH}_4$  mass were assumed to be accurate. Here, the adjustment approach was to decrease carbon storage. Thus, landfill carbon storage was calculated as the residual of initial carbon content minus ( $2 \times \text{CH}_4^C$ ). The resulting adjusted  $\text{CH}_4$  yields and carbon storage are presented in Exhibit 6-6.

For branches, dimensional lumber, medium-density fiberboard, and mixed MSW, the measured  $\text{CH}_4$  yield as a percentage of initial carbon was considered to be the most realistic estimate for methane yield, based on consultation with Dr. Barlaz. Therefore, no adjustment was made for these materials.

For gypsum board, the sulfate in wallboard is estimated to reduce methane generation, as bacteria use sulfate preferentially to the pathway that results in methane, as suggested by Dr. Barlaz. As such, methane yield from gypsum board is likely to be negligible and is therefore adjusted to 0% in WARM.

**Exhibit 6-6: Adjusted  $\text{CH}_4$  Yield and Carbon Storage by Material Type**

Material	Adjusted Yield of $\text{CH}_4$ as Proportion of Initial Carbon	Adjusted Carbon Storage as Proportion of Initial Carbon
Corrugated Containers <sup>a</sup>	22%	55%
Newspaper <sup>b</sup>	8%	84%
Office Paper <sup>a</sup>	44%	12%
Coated Paper <sup>b</sup>	17%	66%
Food Waste - Vegetable <sup>a</sup>	42%	17%
Food Waste - Non-Vegetable <sup>a</sup>	35%	30%
Grass <sup>a</sup>	23%	53%
Leaves <sup>a</sup>	8%	85%
Branches <sup>c</sup>	12%	77%
Mixed MSW <sup>c</sup>	16%	19%
Gypsum Board <sup>d</sup>	0%	55%
Dimensional Lumber <sup>c</sup>	1%	88%
Medium-density Fiberboard <sup>c</sup>	1%	84%
Wood Flooring <sup>b</sup>	2%	96%

<sup>a</sup>  $\text{CH}_4$  yield is adjusted to account for measurement uncertainty in the analytic techniques to measure these quantities. For corrugated containers, office paper, food waste, grass, and leaves, the yield of  $\text{CH}_4$  was increased such that the proportion of initial carbon emitted as landfill gas (i.e.,  $2 \times \text{CH}_4$ ) plus the proportion that remains stored in the landfill is equal to 100% of the initial carbon.

<sup>b</sup> For coated paper, newspaper, and wood flooring, the proportion of initial carbon that is stored in the landfill is decreased such that the proportion of initial carbon emitted as landfill gas (i.e.,  $2 \times \text{CH}_4$ ) plus the proportion that remains stored in the landfill is equal to 100% of the initial carbon.

<sup>c</sup> For branches, dimensional lumber, medium-density fiberboard, and mixed MSW, the measured  $\text{CH}_4$  yield as a percentage of initial carbon and measured proportion of initial carbon stored shown in columns b and d, respectively of Exhibit 6-5 was considered to be the most realistic estimate for methane yield. Therefore, these values were not adjusted.

<sup>d</sup> For gypsum board, the sulfate in wallboard is estimated to reduce methane generation; thus, the methane yield from gypsum board is likely to be negligible and is therefore adjusted to 0%.

Dr. Barlaz's experiment did not test all of the biodegradable material types in WARM. EPA identified proxies for the remaining material types for which there were no experimental data.

Magazines and third-class mail placed in a landfill were assumed to contain a mix of coated paper and office paper and were therefore assumed to behave like an average of those two materials. Similarly, phone books and textbooks were assumed to behave in the same way as newspaper and office paper, respectively. Fruits and vegetables were assumed to behave like vegetable food waste, while beef, poultry, grains, bread, and dairy products were assumed to behave like non-vegetable food waste. In addition, the ratio of dry-to-wet weight was tailored to each food-type based on data obtained from a Clemson study (Clemson 2021) and the USDA Agriculture Research Service (USDA 2015). Results from two studies by Wang et al. were used for dimensional lumber, medium-density fiberboard, and wood flooring (2011; 2013). For wood flooring, the ratio of dry-to-wet weight was adjusted to more accurately represent the moisture content of wood lumber (Staley and Barlaz, 2009). Exhibit 6-7 shows the landfill CH<sub>4</sub> emission factors and the final carbon storage factors for all applicable material types.

**Exhibit 6-7: CH<sub>4</sub> Yield for Solid Waste Components**

Material	Initial Biogenic Carbon Content	Adjusted Yield of CH <sub>4</sub> as Proportion of Initial Carbon	Final (Adjusted) CH <sub>4</sub> Generation, MTCO <sub>2</sub> E/Dry Metric Ton <sup>a</sup>	Final (Adjusted) CH <sub>4</sub> Generation (MTCO <sub>2</sub> E /Wet Short Ton) <sup>b</sup>
Corrugated Containers	47%	22%	3.48	2.62
Magazines/Third-class Mail	36%	12%	1.43	1.19
Newspaper	49%	8%	1.33	1.05
Office Paper	32%	44%	4.71	3.89
Phonebooks	49%	8%	1.33	1.05
Textbooks	32%	44%	4.71	3.89
Dimensional Lumber	49%	1%	0.24	0.17
Medium-density Fiberboard	44%	1%	0.08	0.06
Food Waste	52%	38%	6.65	1.72
Food Waste (meat only)	57%	35%	6.60	1.75
Food Waste (non-meat)	51%	39%	6.60	1.70
Beef	57%	35%	6.60	1.62
Poultry	57%	35%	6.60	1.86
Grains	57%	35%	6.60	5.33
Bread	57%	35%	6.60	3.83
Fruits and Vegetables	48%	42%	6.60	0.69
Dairy Products	57%	35%	6.60	1.82
Yard Trimmings				
Grass	45%	23%	3.48	0.57
Leaves	46%	8%	1.17	0.65
Branches	49%	12%	1.90	1.45
Wood Flooring	43%	2%	0.27	0.18
Drywall <sup>c</sup>	5%	0%	0	0

<sup>a</sup> Final adjusted CH<sub>4</sub> generation per dry metric ton is the product of the initial carbon content and the final percent carbon emitted as CH<sub>4</sub> multiplied by the molecular ratio of carbon to CH<sub>4</sub> (12/16).

<sup>b</sup> CH<sub>4</sub> generation is converted from per dry metric ton to per wet short ton by multiplying the CH<sub>4</sub> generation on a dry metric ton basis by (1 – the material’s moisture content) and by converting from metric tons to short tons of material.

<sup>c</sup> Drywall was assumed to have characteristics similar to gypsum board.

### 6.2.2.2 Component-Specific Decay Rates

The second factor in estimating material-specific landfill emissions is the rate at which a material decays under anaerobic conditions in the landfill. The decay rate is an important factor that influences the landfill collection efficiency described further in the next section. Although the final adjusted CH<sub>4</sub> yield shown in Exhibit 6-7 will eventually occur no matter what the decay rate, the rate at which the material decays influences how much of the CH<sub>4</sub> yield will eventually be captured for landfills with collection systems.

Recent studies by De la Cruz and Barlaz (2010) found that different materials degrade at different rates relative to bulk MSW rates of decay. For example, one short ton of a relatively inert wood material—such as lumber—will degrade slowly and produce a smaller amount of methane than food waste, which readily decays over a much shorter timeframe. Materials will also degrade faster under wetter landfill conditions. Consequently, the rate at which CH<sub>4</sub> emissions are generated from decaying material in a landfill depends upon: (1) the type of material placed in the landfill, and (2) the moisture conditions of the landfill.

De la Cruz and Barlaz (2010) measured component-specific decay rates in laboratory experiments that were then scaled to field-level, component-specific decay rates based on mixed MSW field-scale decay rates published in EPA (1998) guidance.

To scale the laboratory-scale, component-specific decay rate measurements to field-scale values, De la Cruz and Barlaz (2010) assumed that the weighted average decay rate for a waste mixture of the same composition as MSW would be equal to the bulk MSW decay rate. They also related a lab-scale decay rate for mixed MSW to the field-scale decay rate using a scaling factor. Using these two relationships, the authors were able to estimate field-scale decay rates for different materials based on the laboratory data. The following equations were used to estimate the component-specific decay rates:

**Equation 1**

$$f \times \sum_{i=1}^n k_{lab,i} \times (wt. fraction)_i = decay rate$$

**Equation 2**

$$k_{field,i} = f \times k_{lab,i}$$

where,

- $f$  = a correction factor to force the left side of the equation to equal the overall MSW decay rate
- $k_{lab,i}$  = the component-specific decay rate calculated from lab experiments
- $k_{field,i}$  = the component-specific decay rate determined for the field
- $i$  = the  $i^{th}$  waste component

Based on the results from De la Cruz and Barlaz (2010), the Excel version of WARM allows users to select different component-specific decay rates based on different assumed moisture contents of the landfill to estimate the rate at which CH<sub>4</sub> is emitted for each material type (or “component”). The five MSW decay rates used are:

1.  $k = 0.02/\text{year}$  (“Dry”), corresponding to landfills receiving fewer than 20 inches of annual precipitation: based values reported in EPA (2010)
2.  $k = 0.04/\text{year}$  (“Moderate”), corresponding to landfills receiving between 20 and 40 inches of annual precipitation: based values reported in EPA (2010)
3.  $k = 0.06/\text{year}$  (“Wet”), corresponding to landfills receiving greater than 40 inches of annual precipitation: based values reported in EPA (2010)
4.  $k = 0.12/\text{year}$  (“Bioreactor”), corresponding to landfills operating as bioreactors where water is added until the moisture content reaches 40 percent moisture on a wet-weight basis: based on expert judgment using values reported in Barlaz et al. (2010) and Tolaymat et al. (2010)
5.  $k = 0.052/\text{year}$  (“National Average”), corresponding to a weighted average based on the share of waste received at each landfill type: based on expert judgment using values reported in EPA (2010)

The final waste component-specific decay rates as a function of landfill moisture conditions are provided in Exhibit 6-8.

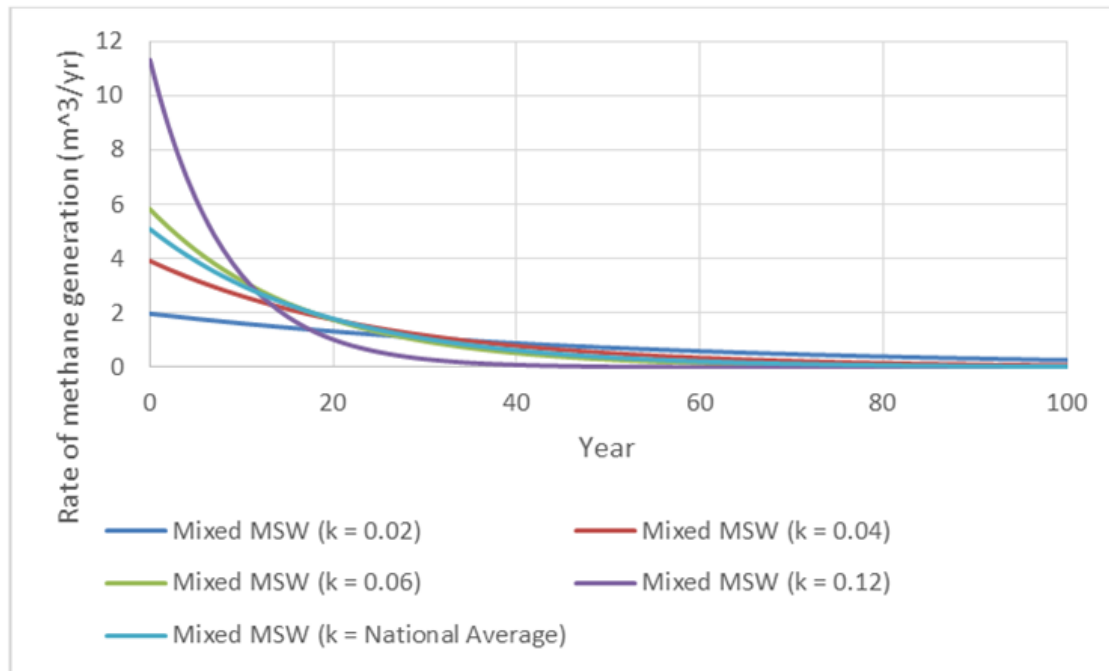
**Exhibit 6-8: Component-Specific Decay Rates (yr<sup>-1</sup>) by Landfill Moisture Scenario**

Material	Landfill Moisture Conditions				
	Dry	Moderate	Wet	Bioreactor	National Average
Corrugated Containers	0.01	0.02	0.04	0.06	0.03
Magazines/Third-Class Mail	0.06	0.12	0.24	0.37	0.16
Newspaper	0.02	0.03	0.07	0.10	0.04
Office Paper	0.02	0.03	0.06	0.09	0.04
Phonebooks	0.02	0.03	0.07	0.10	0.04
Textbooks	0.02	0.03	0.06	0.09	0.04
Dimensional Lumber	0.04	0.08	0.16	0.25	0.11
Medium-Density Fiberboard	0.03	0.06	0.13	0.19	0.08
Food Waste	0.07	0.14	0.29	0.43	0.19
Yard Trimmings	0.10	0.20	0.39	0.59	0.26
Grass	0.15	0.30	0.60	0.89	0.39
Leaves	0.09	0.17	0.34	0.51	0.22
Branches	0.01	0.02	0.03	0.05	0.02
Mixed MSW	0.02	0.04	0.08	0.12	0.05
Drywall <sup>a</sup>	–	–	–	–	–
Wood Flooring <sup>a</sup>	–	–	–	–	–

– = Zero Emissions.

<sup>a</sup>Decay rates were not estimated since WARM assumes that the construction and demolition landfills where these materials are disposed of do not collect landfill gas.

The profile of methane emissions as materials decay in landfills over time is commonly approximated using a first-order decay methodology summarized in De la Cruz and Barlaz (2010). The CH<sub>4</sub> generation potential of landfilled waste decreases gradually throughout time and can be estimated using first order decomposition mathematics. The profile of methane emissions from landfills over time for mixed MSW is shown in Exhibit 6-9 as a graphic representation of the methane emissions approximated using a first-order decay equation. As Exhibit 6-9 shows, materials will degrade faster under wetter conditions in landfills (i.e., landfills whose conditions imply higher decay rates for materials).

**Exhibit 6-9. Rate of Methane Generation for Mixed MSW as a Function of Decay Rate**

Although in each landfill moisture scenario, the total final CH<sub>4</sub> yield for solid waste components (Exhibit 6-7) will eventually be emitted over time, the rate at which methane is emitted greatly depends on the decay rate. Finally, since different materials have very different methane emission profiles in landfills, the effectiveness and timing of the installation of landfill gas collection systems can greatly influence methane emissions, as discussed in the next section.

### 6.2.2.3 Landfill Gas Collection

WARM estimates the amount of methane that is collected by landfill gas collection equipment. In practice, the landfill gas collection system efficiency does not remain constant over the duration of gas production. Rather, the gas collection system at any particular landfill is typically expanded over time. Usually, only a small percentage (or none) of the gas produced soon after waste burial is collected, while almost all of the gas produced is collected once a final cover is installed. To provide a better estimate of gas collection system efficiency, EPA used a Monte Carlo analysis to estimate the fraction of produced gas that is vented directly, flared and utilized for energy recovery while considering annual waste disposal and landfill operating life (Levis and Barlaz, 2014).<sup>33</sup>

The gas collection efficiencies that WARM uses are evaluated from the perspective of a short ton of a specific material placed in the landfill at year zero. The efficiencies are calculated based on one of five moisture conditions (dry, moderate, wet, bioreactor, and national average conditions, described in section 6.2.2.2) and one of four landfill gas collection practices over a 100-year time period, which is approximately the amount of time required for 95 percent of the potential landfill gas to be produced under the “Dry” (k = 0.02/yr) landfill scenario. The final average efficiency is equal to the total CH<sub>4</sub> collected over 100 years divided by the total CH<sub>4</sub> produced over 100 years.

The combination of four different landfill gas collection scenarios and five different landfill moisture conditions means there are 20 possible landfill gas collection efficiencies possible for each

<sup>33</sup> This improved analysis of landfill gas collection was incorporated in June 2014 into WARM Version 13.

material in WARM. The landfill collection efficiency scenarios are described below and the assumptions for each are shown in Exhibit 6-10:

1. Typical collection – phased-in collection with an improved cover; judged to represent the average U.S. landfill, although every landfill is unique and a typical landfill is an approximation of reality.
2. Worst-case collection – the minimum collection requirements under EPA’s New Source Performance Standards.
3. Aggressive collection – landfills where the operator is aggressive in gas collection relative to a typical landfill; bioreactor landfills are assumed to collect gas aggressively.
4. California regulatory scenario<sup>34</sup> – equivalent to landfill management practices based on California regulatory requirements.

**Exhibit 6-10: WARM Gas Collection Scenario Assumptions and Efficiencies Compared to EPA AP-42 (1998) with Landfill Gas Recovery for Energy**

Scenario	Gas Collection Scenario Description	Gas Collection Scenario	Landfill Gas Collection Efficiency (%) for Mixed MSW <sup>a</sup>				
			MSW Decay Rate (yr <sup>-1</sup> )				
			0.02	0.04	0.06	0.12	National Average
AP-42	EPA default gas collection assumption (EPA 1998 AP-42) (not modeled in WARM)	All years: 75%	75.0	75.0	75.0	75.0	75.0
1	“Typical collection”, judged to represent the average U.S. landfill	Years 0–1: 0% Years 2-4: 50% Years 5–14: 75% Years 15 to 1 year before final cover: 82.5% Final cover: 90%	68.2	65.0	64.1	60.6	64.8
2	“Worst-case collection” under EPA New Source Performance Standards (NSPS)	Years 0-4: 0% Years 5-9: 50% Years 10–14: 75% Years 15 to 1 year before final cover: 82.5% Final cover: 90%	66.2	61.3	59.2	50.6	60.3
3	“Aggressive gas collection,” typical bioreactor operation	Year 0: 0% Years 0.5-2: 50% Years 3–14: 75% Years 15 to 1 year before final cover: 82.5% Final Cover: 90%	68.6	65.8	66.3	63.9	66.4
4	“California regulatory scenario”, landfill management based on California regulatory requirements	Year 0: 0% Year 1: 50% Years 2-7: 80% Years 8 to 1 year before final cover: 85% Final cover: 90%	83.6	79.5	77.4	72.9	78.8

<sup>a</sup> The values in this table are for landfills that recover gas for energy. In reality, a small share of gas recovered is eventually flared. The values provided in this table include both the gas recovered for energy and the small portion recovered for flaring.

The landfill gas collection efficiencies by material type for each of the four landfill collection efficiency scenarios and each of the five moisture conditions are provided in Exhibit 6-11. In addition to the gas collected, EPA also took into account the percentage of gas that is flared, oxidized, and emitted for landfills that recover gas for energy, as described in Levis and Barlaz (2014). Some of the uncollected

<sup>34</sup> This additional landfill gas collection scenario was incorporated in June 2014 into WARM Version 13 to allow WARM users to estimate and view landfill management results based on California regulatory requirements.

methane is oxidized to CO<sub>2</sub> as it passes through the landfill cover; Levis and Barlaz (2014) adapted EPA recommendations for methane oxidation (71 FR 230, 2013) to develop the following oxidation rates at various stages of landfill gas collection:

- Without gas collection or final cover: 10 percent
- With gas collection before final cover: 20 percent
- After final cover installation: 35 percent

In the EPA recommendations, the fraction of uncollected methane that is oxidized varies with the methane flux (mass per area per time) and ranges from 10 percent to 35 percent (71 FR 230, 2013). Measurement or estimation of the methane flux is possible on a site-specific basis but requires assumptions on landfill geometry and waste density to estimate flux for a generic landfill as is represented by WARM. As such, the methane oxidation values published by EPA were used as guidance for the values listed above. Landfills with a final cover and a gas collection system in place will have a relatively low flux through the cover, which justifies the upper end of the range (35 percent) given by EPA. Similarly, landfills without a gas collection system in place will have a relatively high flux, suggesting that an oxidation rate of 10 percent is most appropriate. Landfills with a gas collection system in place but prior to final cover placement were assigned an oxidation rate of 20 percent. Based on preliminary calculations for a variety of landfill geometries and waste densities, Levis and Barlaz (2014) determined that the methane flux would justify an oxidation rate of 25 percent most but not all of the time. As such, an oxidation rate of 20 percent was adopted in WARM for landfills with gas collection before final cover (Levis and Barlaz, 2014).

For landfill gas that is not collected for energy use, EPA took into account the percentage of landfill CH<sub>4</sub> that is flared (when recovery for flaring is assumed), oxidized near the surface of the landfill, and emitted. Based on analysis by Levis and Barlaz, EPA estimated the percentage of the landfill CH<sub>4</sub> generated that are either flared, chemically oxidized or converted by bacteria to CO<sub>2</sub>, and emitted for each material type for each of the four landfill collection efficiency scenarios and each of the five moisture conditions (Levis and Barlaz, 2014).



**Exhibit 6-11: Waste Component-Specific Collection Efficiencies by Landfill Moisture Condition with Landfill Gas Recovery for Energy**

Material	Typical Landfill Scenario					Worst-Case Landfill Scenario					Aggressive Collection Landfill Scenario					California Regulations Collection Scenario				
	Dry	Mod-erate	Wet	Bio-react-or	Natio-nal Avg.	Dry	Mode-rate	Wet	Bio-react-or	Natio-nal Avg.	Dry	Mode-rate	Wet	Bio-react-or	Natio-nal Avg.	Dry	Mode-rate	Wet	Bio-react-or	Natio-nal Avg.
Corrugated Containers	58%	53%	54%	55%	56%	53%	43%	53%	50%	54%	59%	56%	56%	58%	57%	65%	61%	60%	62%	61%
Magazines/Third-class Mail	61%	55%	52%	45%	54%	60%	54%	40%	26%	43%	61%	56%	57%	51%	57%	66%	59%	61%	54%	62%
Newspaper	59%	55%	59%	57%	59%	55%	46%	55%	49%	56%	61%	58%	61%	60%	61%	67%	63%	65%	65%	65%
Office Paper	62%	59%	58%	57%	59%	61%	56%	55%	50%	56%	62%	59%	60%	60%	60%	67%	64%	64%	65%	64%
Phonebooks	62%	58%	59%	57%	59%	61%	56%	55%	49%	56%	62%	59%	61%	60%	61%	67%	63%	65%	65%	65%
Textbooks	62%	59%	58%	57%	59%	61%	56%	55%	50%	56%	62%	59%	60%	60%	60%	67%	64%	64%	65%	64%
Dimensional Lumber	62%	60%	57%	50%	58%	61%	56%	48%	35%	50%	63%	61%	60%	55%	60%	67%	65%	65%	60%	65%
Medium-Density Fiberboard	62%	59%	59%	53%	59%	59%	52%	51%	40%	53%	63%	61%	62%	58%	62%	68%	66%	67%	62%	67%
Food Waste	56%	51%	50%	42%	52%	50%	40%	36%	22%	40%	58%	54%	55%	49%	55%	64%	59%	59%	51%	60%
Food Waste (meat only)	56%	51%	50%	42%	52%	50%	40%	36%	22%	40%	58%	54%	55%	49%	55%	64%	59%	59%	51%	60%
Food Waste (non-meat)	56%	51%	50%	42%	52%	50%	40%	36%	22%	40%	58%	54%	55%	49%	55%	64%	59%	59%	51%	60%
Beef	56%	51%	50%	42%	52%	50%	40%	36%	22%	40%	58%	54%	55%	49%	55%	64%	59%	59%	51%	60%
Poultry	56%	51%	50%	42%	52%	50%	40%	36%	22%	40%	58%	54%	55%	49%	55%	64%	59%	59%	51%	60%
Grains	56%	51%	50%	42%	52%	50%	40%	36%	22%	40%	58%	54%	55%	49%	55%	64%	59%	59%	51%	60%
Bread	56%	51%	50%	42%	52%	50%	40%	36%	22%	40%	58%	54%	55%	49%	55%	64%	59%	59%	51%	60%
Fruits and Vegetables	56%	51%	50%	42%	52%	50%	40%	36%	22%	40%	58%	54%	55%	49%	55%	64%	59%	59%	51%	60%
Dairy Products	56%	51%	50%	42%	52%	50%	40%	36%	22%	40%	58%	54%	55%	49%	55%	64%	59%	59%	51%	60%
Yard Trimmings	43%	37%	44%	39%	47%	40%	33%	31%	21%	35%	43%	39%	49%	44%	50%	47%	41%	52%	45%	54%
Grass	61%	53%	39%	33%	41%	60%	52%	20%	9%	25%	61%	54%	45%	39%	46%	65%	57%	48%	38%	50%
Leaves	49%	43%	47%	40%	49%	39%	27%	33%	19%	37%	51%	47%	52%	46%	53%	57%	51%	57%	48%	58%
Branches	--	--	51%	52%	54%	--	--	51%	49%	53%	--	--	53%	54%	55%	--	--	57%	58%	59%
Mixed MSW	62%	59%	60%	57%	60%	61%	56%	55%	47%	56%	62%	59%	62%	60%	62%	67%	64%	67%	65%	66%
Gypsum <sup>a</sup>	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Wood Flooring <sup>a</sup>	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

-- = Zero Emissions.

<sup>a</sup>WARM assumes that construction and demolition landfills do not collect landfill gas.

### 6.2.3 Emissions from Transportation to Landfills and Landfill Operation

WARM includes emissions associated with transportation and landfilling the material. Transportation energy emissions occur when fossil fuels are combusted to collect and transport material to the landfill facility and then to operate landfill operational equipment. To calculate the emissions, WARM relies on assumptions from FAL (1994) for the equipment emissions and NREL's US Life Cycle Inventory Database (USLCI) (NREL, 2015). The NREL emission factor assumes a diesel, short-haul truck. Exhibit 6-12 provides the transportation emission factor calculation.

**Exhibit 6-12: Transportation CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions Assumptions and Calculation**

Equipment	Total (MTCO <sub>2</sub> E/Short Ton)
Collection Vehicles	0.00
Landfill Equipment	0.02
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.02</b>

### 6.2.4 Estimating Landfill Carbon Storage

The other anthropogenic fate of carbon in landfills is storage. As described in section 6.2.1, a portion of the carbon in biodegradable materials (i.e., food waste, yard trimmings, paper, and wood) that is not completely decomposed by anaerobic bacteria remains stored in the landfill. This carbon storage would not normally occur under natural conditions, so it is counted as an anthropogenic sink (IPCC, 2006; Bogner et al., 2007).

The discussion in section 6.2.2 on initial carbon contents and CH<sub>4</sub> generation includes the measured carbon stored from the Barlaz (1998), Wang et al. (2013), Wang et al. (2011), and Levis et al. (2013) experiments. For the most part, the amount of stored carbon measured as the output during these experiments is considered the final ratio of carbon stored to total initial dry weight of each material type. For newspaper, wood flooring, and coated paper—which is used to estimate landfill characteristics for magazines and third-class mail—the amount of carbon stored is reduced because carbon outputs were *greater than* initial carbon.

To estimate the final carbon storage factor, the proportion of initial carbon stored found in Exhibit 6-6 is multiplied by the initial carbon contents in Exhibit 6-4 to obtain the ratio of carbon storage to dry weight for each material type found in Exhibit 6-13. These estimates are then converted from dry weight to wet weight and from grams to metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> per wet short ton of material. The last column of Exhibit 6-13 provides the final carbon storage factors for the biodegradable solid waste components modeled in WARM.

**Exhibit 6-13: Carbon Storage for Solid Waste Components**

Material	Ratio of Carbon Storage to Dry Weight (gram C/dry gram)	Ratio of Dry Weight to Wet Weight	Ratio of Carbon Storage to Wet Weight (gram C/wet gram)	Amount of Carbon Stored (MTCO <sub>2</sub> E per Wet Short Ton)
Corrugated Containers	0.26	0.83	0.22	0.72
Magazines/Third-class Mail	0.28	0.92	0.25	0.85
Newspaper	0.41	0.87	0.36	1.19
Office Paper	0.04	0.91	0.04	0.12
Phonebooks	0.41	0.87	0.36	1.19
Textbooks	0.04	0.91	0.04	0.12
Dimensional Lumber	0.44	0.75	0.33	1.09
Medium-density Fiberboard	0.37	0.75	0.28	0.92
Food Waste	0.12	0.29	0.04	0.12
Food Waste (meat only)	0.17	0.29	0.05	0.16
Food Waste (non-meat)	0.11	0.28	0.03	0.11
Beef	0.17	0.27	0.05	0.15
Poultry	0.17	0.31	0.05	0.17
Grains	0.17	0.89	0.15	0.50
Bread	0.17	0.64	0.11	0.36
Fruits and Vegetables	0.08	0.12	0.01	0.03
Dairy Products	0.17	0.30	0.05	0.17
Yard Trimmings	0.31	0.45	0.16	0.54
Grass	0.24	0.18	0.04	0.14
Leaves	0.39	0.62	0.24	0.79
Branches	0.38	0.84	0.32	1.06
Mixed MSW	0.08	0.80	0.06	0.21
Drywall	0.03	0.94	0.02	0.08
Wood Flooring	0.42	0.75	0.31	1.04

### 6.2.5 Electric Utility GHG Emissions Avoided

The CH<sub>4</sub> component of landfill gas that is collected from landfills can be combusted to produce heat and electricity, and recovery of heat and electricity from landfill gas offsets the combustion of other fossil fuel inputs. WARM models the recovery of landfill gas for electricity generation and assumes that this electricity offsets non-baseload electricity generation in the power sector.

WARM applies non-baseload electricity emission rates to calculate the emissions offset from landfill gas energy recovery because the model assumes that incremental increases in landfill energy recovery will affect non-baseload power plants (i.e., power plants that are “demand-following” and adjust to marginal changes in the supply and demand of electricity). EPA calculated non-baseload emission rates as the average emissions rate from power plants that combust fuel and have capacity factors less than 0.8 (EPA, 2015a).

EPA estimated the avoided GHG emissions per MTCO<sub>2</sub>E of CH<sub>4</sub> combusted using several physical constants and data from EPA’s Landfill Methane Outreach Program and eGRID (EPA, 2013; EPA, 2018c). The mix of fuels used to produce electricity varies regionally in the United States; consequently, EPA applied a different CO<sub>2</sub>-intensity for electricity generation depending upon where the electricity is offset. The Excel version of WARM includes CO<sub>2</sub>-intensity emission factors for non-baseload electricity generated in nine different U.S. regions as well as a U.S.-average CO<sub>2</sub>-intensity (EPA, 2015a). The formula used to calculate the quantity of electricity generation emissions avoided per MTCO<sub>2</sub>E of CH<sub>4</sub> combusted is as follows:

$$\frac{BTU_{CH_4}}{H_{LFGTE}} \times a \times E_{Grid} = R$$

Where:

- Bt<sub>U</sub>CH<sub>4</sub> = Energy content of CH<sub>4</sub> per MTCO<sub>2</sub>E CH<sub>4</sub> combusted; assumed to be 1,012 Btu per cubic foot of CH<sub>4</sub> (EPA, 2013), converted into Btu per MTCO<sub>2</sub>E CH<sub>4</sub> assuming 20 grams per cubic foot of CH<sub>4</sub> at standard temperature and pressure and a global warming potential of CH<sub>4</sub> of 21
- H<sub>LFGTE</sub> = Heat rate of landfill gas to energy conversion; assumed to be 11,700 Btu per kWh generated (EPA, 2013)
- a = Net capacity factor of electricity generation; assumed to be 85 percent (EPA, 2013)
- E<sub>grid</sub> = Non-baseload CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalent GHG emissions intensity of electricity produced at the regional or national electricity grid; values assumed for each region and U.S. average are shown in Exhibit 6-15
- R = Ratio of GHG emissions avoided from electricity generation per MTCO<sub>2</sub>E of CH<sub>4</sub> combusted for landfill gas to energy recovery

Exhibit 6-14 shows variables in the GHG emissions offset for the national average fuel mix. The final ratio is the product of columns (a) through (h). Exhibit 6-15 shows the amount of carbon avoided per kilowatt-hour of generated electricity and the final ratio of MTCO<sub>2</sub>E avoided of utility carbon per MTCO<sub>2</sub>E of CH<sub>4</sub> combusted (column (g) and resulting column (i)).

**Exhibit 6-14: Calculation to Estimate Utility GHGs Avoided Through Combustion of Landfill CH<sub>4</sub> for Electricity Based on National Average Electricity Grid Mix**

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)	(i)
Metric Tons CH <sub>4</sub> /MTCO <sub>2</sub> E CH <sub>4</sub> Combusted	Grams CH <sub>4</sub> /Metric Ton CH <sub>4</sub>	Cubic Ft. CH <sub>4</sub> /Gram CH <sub>4</sub>	Btu/Cubic Ft. CH <sub>4</sub>	kWh Electricity Generated/Btu	Electricity Generation Efficiency	Kg Utility CO <sub>2</sub> Avoided/kWh Generated Electricity	Metric Tons Avoided Utility CO <sub>2</sub> /Kg Utility CO <sub>2</sub>	Ratio of MTCO <sub>2</sub> E Avoided Utility CO <sub>2</sub> per MTCO <sub>2</sub> E CH <sub>4</sub> Combusted
0.04	1,000,000	0.05	1,012	0.00009	0.85	0.73	0.001	0.11

**Exhibit 6-15: Ratio of MTCO<sub>2</sub>E Avoided Utility Carbon per MTCO<sub>2</sub>E CH<sub>4</sub> Combusted by Region**

Region	Kg Utility CO <sub>2</sub> Avoided/kWh Generated Electricity	Ratio of MTCO <sub>2</sub> E Avoided Utility C per MTCO <sub>2</sub> E CH <sub>4</sub>
Pacific	0.49	0.07
Mountain	0.80	0.12
West-North Central	0.93	0.14
West-South Central	0.68	0.10
East-North Central	0.93	0.14
East-South Central	0.75	0.11
New England	0.48	0.07
Mid Atlantic	0.66	0.10
South Atlantic	0.70	0.10
National Average	0.73	0.11

If regional avoided utility emission factors are not employed, WARM calculates U.S.-average avoided utility emission factors based on the percent of CH<sub>4</sub> generated at landfills in the nation with landfill gas recovery and electricity production found in Exhibit 6-2, and assuming U.S.-average, non-baseload electricity GHG emission intensity. Exhibit 6-16 shows this calculation for each material type for the national average fuel mix.

**Exhibit 6-16: Overall Avoided Utility CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions per Short Ton of Waste Material (National Average Grid Mix)**

(a) Material	(b) CH <sub>4</sub> Generation (MTCO <sub>2</sub> E/ Wet Short Ton) (Exhibit 6-7)	Methane from Landfills With LFG Recovery and Electricity Generation		Methane from Landfills With LFG Recovery and Electricity Generation		(g) Percentage of CH <sub>4</sub> From Landfills with LFG Recovery and Electricity Generation (Exhibit 6-2)	(h) Net Avoided CO <sub>2</sub> Emissions from Energy Recovery (MTCO <sub>2</sub> E/Wet Short Ton) (h = f × g)
		(c) Percentage of CH <sub>4</sub> Recovered (Exhibit 6-11)	(d) Utility GHG Emissions Avoided per MTCO <sub>2</sub> E CH <sub>4</sub> Combusted (MTCO <sub>2</sub> E) (Exhibit 6-15)	(e) Percentage of CH <sub>4</sub> Recovered for Electricity Generation Not Utilized Due to LFG System "Down Time"	(f) Utility GHG Emissions Avoided (MTCO <sub>2</sub> E/ Wet Short Ton) (f = b × c × d × (1-e))		
Corrugated Containers	2.62	56%	0.11	3%	(0.15)	63%	(0.10)
Magazines/Third-class Mail	1.19	54%	(0.11)	3%	(0.07)	66%	(0.04)
Newspaper	1.05	59%	(0.11)	3%	(0.06)	66%	(0.04)
Office Paper	3.89	59%	(0.11)	3%	(0.24)	66%	(0.16)
Phonebooks	1.05	59%	(0.11)	3%	(0.06)	66%	(0.04)
Textbooks	3.89	59%	(0.11)	3%	(0.24)	66%	(0.16)
Dimensional Lumber	0.17	58%	(0.11)	3%	(0.01)	2%	(0.00)
Medium-density Fiberboard	0.06	59%	(0.11)	3%	(0.00)	2%	(0.00)
Food Waste	1.72	52%	(0.11)	3%	(0.09)	66%	(0.06)
Food Waste (meat only)	1.75	52%	(0.11)	3%	(0.09)	66%	(0.06)
Food Waste (non-meat)	1.70	52%	(0.11)	3%	(0.09)	66%	(0.06)
Beef	1.62	52%	(0.11)	3%	(0.09)	66%	(0.06)
Poultry	1.86	52%	(0.11)	3%	(0.10)	66%	(0.07)
Grains	5.33	52%	(0.11)	3%	(0.28)	66%	(0.19)
Bread	3.83	52%	(0.11)	3%	(0.20)	66%	(0.14)
Fruits and Vegetables	0.69	52%	(0.11)	3%	(0.04)	66%	(0.02)
Dairy Products	1.82	52%	(0.11)	3%	(0.10)	66%	(0.06)
Yard Trimmings	0.81	47%	(0.11)	3%	(0.04)	66%	(0.03)
Grass	0.57	41%	(0.11)	3%	(0.02)	66%	(0.02)
Leaves	0.65	49%	(0.11)	3%	(0.03)	66%	(0.02)
Branches	1.45	54%	(0.11)	3%	(0.08)	66%	(0.05)
Mixed Paper (general)	2.38	57%	(0.11)	3%	(0.14)	66%	(0.09)

(a)  Material	(b)  CH <sub>4</sub> Generation (MTCO <sub>2</sub> E/ Wet Short Ton) (Exhibit 6-7)			Methane from Landfills With LFG Recovery and Electricity Generation		(g)  Percentage of CH <sub>4</sub> From Landfills with LFG Recovery and Electricity Generation (Exhibit 6-2)	(h)  Net Avoided CO <sub>2</sub> Emissions from Energy Recovery (MTCO <sub>2</sub> E/Wet Short Ton) (h = f × g)
		(c)  Percentage of CH <sub>4</sub> Recovered (Exhibit 6-11)	(d)  Utility GHG Emissions Avoided per MTCO <sub>2</sub> E CH <sub>4</sub> Combusted (MTCO <sub>2</sub> E) (Exhibit 6-15)	(e)  Percentage of CH <sub>4</sub> Recovered for Electricity Generation Not Utilized Due to LFG System "Down Time"	(f)  Utility GHG Emissions Avoided (MTCO <sub>2</sub> E/ Wet Short Ton) (f = b × c × d × (1-e))		
Mixed Paper (primarily residential)	2.29	57%	(0.11)	3%	(0.14)	66%	(0.09)
Mixed Paper (primarily from offices)	2.26	57%	(0.11)	3%	(0.13)	66%	(0.09)
Mixed Recyclables	2.01	49%	(0.11)	3%	(0.10)	66%	(0.07)
Mixed Organics	1.30	49%	(0.11)	3%	(0.07)	66%	(0.04)
Mixed MSW	1.62	60%	(0.11)	3%	(0.10)	66%	(0.07)
Wood Flooring <sup>a</sup>	0.18	0%	(0.11)	3%	–	2%	–
Drywall <sup>a</sup>	–	0%	(0.11)	3%	–	2%	–

– = Zero Emissions.

<sup>a</sup> WARM assumes that construction and demolition landfills do not collect landfill gas.

### 6.2.6 Net GHG Emissions from Landfilling

CH<sub>4</sub> emissions, transportation CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, carbon storage, and avoided utility GHG emissions are then summed to estimate the net GHG emissions from landfilling each material type. Exhibit 6-17 shows the net emission factors for landfilling each material based on typical landfill gas collection practices, average landfill moisture conditions (i.e., for landfills receiving between 20 and 40 inches of precipitation annually), and U.S.-average non-baseload electricity grid mix.

**Exhibit 6-17: Net GHG Emissions from Landfilling (MTCO<sub>2</sub>E/Short Ton)**

Material	Transportation to Landfill	Landfill CH <sub>4</sub>	Avoided CO <sub>2</sub> Emissions from Energy Recovery	Landfill Carbon Sequestration	Net Emissions (Post-Consumer)
Aluminum Cans	0.02	–	–	–	0.02
Aluminum Ingot	0.02	–	–	–	0.02
Steel Cans	0.02	–	–	–	0.02
Copper Wire	0.02	–	–	–	0.02
Glass	0.02	–	–	–	0.02
HDPE	0.02	–	–	–	0.02
LDPE	0.02	–	–	–	0.02
PET	0.02	–	–	–	0.02
LLDPE	0.02	–	–	–	0.02
PP	0.02	–	–	–	0.02
PS	0.02	–	–	–	0.02
PVC	0.02	–	–	–	0.02
PLA	0.02	–	–	(1.66)	(1.64)
Corrugated Containers	0.02	0.98	(0.10)	(0.72)	0.18
Magazines/Third-Class Mail	0.02	0.44	(0.04)	(0.85)	(0.43)
Newspaper	0.02	0.37	(0.04)	(1.19)	(0.85)
Office Paper	0.02	1.39	(0.16)	(0.12)	1.13
Phonebooks	0.02	0.37	(0.04)	(1.19)	(0.85)
Textbooks	0.02	1.39	(0.16)	(0.12)	1.13
Dimensional Lumber	0.02	0.15	0.00	(1.09)	(0.92)
Medium-density Fiberboard	0.02	0.05	0.00	(0.92)	(0.85)
Food Waste	0.02	0.66	(0.06)	(0.12)	0.50
Food Waste (meat only)	0.02	0.67	(0.06)	(0.16)	0.46
Food Waste (non-meat)	0.02	0.65	(0.06)	(0.11)	0.50
Beef	0.02	0.62	(0.06)	(0.15)	0.43
Poultry	0.02	0.71	(0.07)	(0.17)	0.49
Grains	0.02	2.04	(0.19)	(0.50)	1.37
Bread	0.02	1.47	(0.14)	(0.36)	0.99
Fruits and Vegetables	0.02	0.26	(0.02)	(0.03)	0.23
Dairy Products	0.02	0.70	(0.06)	(0.17)	0.48
Yard Trimmings	0.02	0.34	(0.03)	(0.54)	(0.20)
Grass	0.02	0.26	(0.02)	(0.14)	0.12
Leaves	0.02	0.26	(0.02)	(0.79)	(0.53)
Branches	0.02	0.56	(0.05)	(1.06)	(0.54)
Mixed Paper (general)	0.02	0.87	(0.09)	(0.72)	0.07
Mixed Paper (primarily residential)	0.02	0.84	(0.09)	(0.76)	0.02
Mixed Paper (primarily from offices)	0.02	0.82	(0.09)	(0.64)	0.11
Mixed Metals	0.02	–	–	–	0.02
Mixed Plastics	0.02	–	–	–	0.02
Mixed Recyclables	0.02	0.73	(0.07)	(0.65)	0.03
Mixed Organics	0.02	0.52	(0.04)	(0.30)	0.18
Mixed MSW	0.02	0.56	(0.07)	(0.21)	0.31

Material	Transportation to Landfill	Landfill CH <sub>4</sub>	Avoided CO <sub>2</sub> Emissions from Energy Recovery	Landfill Carbon Sequestration	Net Emissions (Post-Consumer)
Carpet	0.02	–	–	–	0.02
Desktop CPUs	0.02	–	–	–	0.02
Portable Electronic Devices	0.02	–	–	–	0.02
Flat-panel Displays	0.02	–	–	–	0.02
CRT Displays	0.02	–	–	–	0.02
Electronic Peripherals	0.02	–	–	–	0.02
Hard-copy Devices	0.02	–	–	–	0.02
Mixed Electronics	0.02	–	–	–	0.02
Clay Bricks	0.02	–	–	–	0.02
Concrete	0.02	–	–	–	0.02
Fly Ash	0.02	–	–	–	0.02
Tires	0.02	–	–	–	0.02
Asphalt Concrete	0.02	–	–	–	0.02
Asphalt Shingles	0.02	–	–	–	0.02
Drywall	0.02	–	–	(0.08)	(0.06)
Fiberglass Insulation	0.02	–	–	–	0.02
Structural Steel	0.02	–	–	–	0.02
Vinyl Flooring	0.02	–	–	–	0.02
Wood Flooring <sup>a</sup>	0.02	0.16	–	(1.04)	(0.86)

– = Zero Emissions.

<sup>a</sup> WARM assumes that construction and demolition landfills do not collect landfill gas

In WARM, emissions from landfills are dependent on the user selection of one of four different landfill scenarios (i.e., “Landfills: National Average,” “Landfills Without LFG Recovery,” “Landfills With LFG Recovery and Flaring,” and “Landfills With LFG Recovery and Electric Generation”) as described in section 1. The net landfilling emission factors for landfilling each material based on the default options in WARM (i.e., typical landfill gas collection practices, average landfill moisture conditions, and U.S.-average non-baseload electricity grid mix) are shown in Exhibit 6-18.

**Exhibit 6-18: Landfilling Net Emission Factors in WARM Using Default Options (MTCO<sub>2</sub>E/Ton)**

Material	Landfills: National Average (Exhibit 6-17)	Landfills without LFG Recovery	Landfills with LFG Recovery and Flaring	Landfills with LFG Recovery and Electricity Generation
Aluminum Cans	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
Aluminum Ingot	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
Steel Cans	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
Copper Wire	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
Glass	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
HDPE	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
LDPE	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
PET	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
LLDPE	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
PP	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
PS	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
PVC	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
PLA	(1.64)	(1.64)	(1.64)	(1.64)
Corrugated Containers	0.18	1.66	0.45	0.06
Magazines/Third-Class Mail	(0.43)	0.25	(0.37)	(0.46)
Newspaper	(0.85)	(0.23)	(0.75)	(0.89)
Office Paper	1.13	3.40	1.51	0.95



Material	Landfills: National Average (Exhibit 6-17)	Landfills without LFG Recovery	Landfills with LFG Recovery and Flaring	Landfills with LFG Recovery and Electricity Generation
Phonebooks	(0.85)	(0.23)	(0.75)	(0.96)
Textbooks	1.13	3.40	1.51	0.72
Dimensional Lumber	(0.92)	(0.92)	(1.01)	(1.02)
Medium-density Fiberboard	(0.85)	(0.85)	(0.88)	(0.89)
Food Waste	0.50	1.45	0.57	0.45
Food Waste (meat only)	0.46	1.44	0.57	0.41
Food Waste (non-meat)	0.50	1.43	0.53	0.45
Beef	0.43	1.32	0.50	0.38
Poultry	0.49	1.52	0.57	0.44
Grains	1.37	4.32	1.59	1.22
Bread	0.99	3.11	1.15	0.88
Fruits and Vegetables	0.23	0.61	0.26	0.21
Dairy Products	0.48	1.48	0.55	0.43
Yard Trimmings	(0.20)	0.21	(0.17)	(0.22)
Grass	0.12	0.39	0.12	0.10
Leaves	(0.53)	(0.18)	(0.51)	(0.55)
Branches	(0.54)	0.26	(0.39)	(0.61)
Mixed Paper (general)	0.07	1.44	0.30	(0.03)
Mixed Paper (primarily residential)	0.02	1.33	0.23	(0.09)
Mixed Paper (primarily from offices)	0.11	1.42	0.29	0.02
Mixed Metals	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
Mixed Plastics	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
Mixed Recyclables	0.03	1.18	0.37	(0.13)
Mixed Organics	0.18	0.85	0.21	0.12
Mixed MSW	0.31	1.27	0.46	0.24
Carpet	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
Desktop CPUs	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
Portable Electronic Devices	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
Flat-panel Displays	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
CRT Displays	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
Electronic Peripherals	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
Hard-copy Devices	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
Mixed Electronics	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
Clay Bricks	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
Concrete	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
Fly Ash	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
Tires	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
Asphalt Concrete	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
Asphalt Shingles	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
Drywall	(0.06)	(1.04)	(0.06)	(0.06)
Fiberglass Insulation	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
Structural Steel	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
Vinyl Flooring	0.02	(0.86)	(0.86)	(0.86)
Wood Flooring	(0.86)	0.02	0.02	0.02

### 6.3 LIMITATIONS

The landfilling analysis has several limitations, outlined below.

- The net GHG emissions from landfilling each material are quite sensitive to the LFG recovery rate. Because of the high global warming potential of CH<sub>4</sub>, small changes in the LFG recovery

rate (for the national average landfill) could have a large effect on the net GHG impacts of landfilling each material and the ranking of landfilling relative to other MSW management options.

- The distribution of waste in place is not a perfect proxy for the distribution of ongoing waste generation destined for landfill.
- Ongoing shifts in the use of landfill cover and liner systems are likely to influence the rate of CH<sub>4</sub> generation and collection. As more landfills install effective covers and implement controls to keep water and other liquids out, conditions will be less favorable for degradation of biodegradable wastes. Over the long term, these improvements may result in a decrease in CH<sub>4</sub> generation and an increase in carbon storage. Moreover, Dr. Barlaz believes that the CH<sub>4</sub> yields from his laboratory experiments are likely to be higher than CH<sub>4</sub> yields in a landfill, because the laboratory experiments were designed to generate the maximum amount of CH<sub>4</sub> possible. If the CH<sub>4</sub> yields from the laboratory experiments were higher than yields in a landfill, the net GHG emissions from landfilling biodegradable materials would be lower than estimated here.
- EPA assumed that once wastes are disposed in a landfill, they are never removed. In other words, it was assumed that landfills are never “mined.” A number of communities have mined their landfills—removing and combusting the waste—in order to create more space for continued disposal of waste in the landfill. To the extent that landfills are mined in the future, it is incorrect to assume that carbon stored in a landfill will remain stored. For example, if landfilled wastes are later combusted, the carbon that was stored in the landfill will be oxidized to CO<sub>2</sub> in the combustor.
- The estimate of avoided utility GHG emissions per unit of CH<sub>4</sub> combusted assumes that all landfill gas-to-energy projects produce electricity. In reality, some projects are “direct gas” projects, in which CH<sub>4</sub> is piped directly to the end user for use as fuel. In these cases, the CH<sub>4</sub> typically replaces natural gas as a fuel source. Because natural gas use is less GHG-intensive than average electricity production, direct gas projects will tend to offset fewer GHG emissions than electricity projects will—a fact not reflected in the analysis.
- For landfilling of yard trimmings (and other organic materials), EPA assumed that all carbon storage in a landfill environment is incremental to the storage that occurs in a non-landfill environment. In other words, it was assumed that in a baseline where yard trimmings are returned to the soil (i.e., in a non-landfill environment), all of the carbon is decomposed relatively rapidly (i.e., within several years) to CO<sub>2</sub>, and there is no long-term carbon storage. To the extent that long-term carbon storage occurs in the baseline, the estimates of carbon storage reported here are overstated, and the net postconsumer GHG emissions are understated.
- Another limitation is the assumptions used in developing “corrected” CH<sub>4</sub> yields for biodegradable materials in MSW. Because of the high GWP of CH<sub>4</sub>, a small difference between estimated and actual CH<sub>4</sub> generation values would have a large effect on the GHG impacts of landfilling and the ranking of landfilling relative to other MSW management options.

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## 7 ENERGY IMPACTS

Other chapters in EPA's Waste Reduction Model (WARM) focus on the effects of materials management decisions on greenhouse gases (GHG). Generally, a large portion of GHG emissions is related to energy use in resource acquisition, manufacturing, transportation, and end-of-life life-cycle stages. Not all GHG emissions are related to energy, however, and the effects of GHG are not directly translatable to energy impacts. One of the benefits of WARM is to help users see results in terms of both GHG emissions (metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent or carbon equivalent) and energy (millions of Btu). For additional background, see the [WARM Background and Overview](#) chapter.

The energy effects of materials occur in each life-cycle stage—source reduction, recycling, reuse, manufacturing—and knowledge of those effects can reduce the demand for raw materials and energy. Energy savings can also result from some waste disposal practices, including waste-to-energy combustors and landfill gas-to-energy systems.

To better understand the relationship between materials management and energy use, WARM provides energy factors for five management scenarios (source reduction, recycling, combustion, landfilling, and anaerobic digestion). This chapter discusses how these energy factors affect the relationship between energy savings and GHG benefits.

### 7.1 METHODOLOGY FOR DEVELOPING ENERGY FACTORS

The WARM methodology described in the other chapters focuses on GHG emissions; the methodology in this chapter focuses on all life-cycle components as they appear through the lens of energy consumption or savings, rather than GHG emissions. Components such as forest carbon storage and landfill carbon sequestration are not components in the energy life cycle, and thus we have not included them as energy factors. We base energy factors primarily on the amount of energy required to produce one ton of a given material. The total energy consumed is a result of direct fuel and electricity consumption associated with raw material acquisition and manufacturing, fuel consumption for transportation, and embedded energy. The other WARM chapters on specific materials describe the energy required for processing and transporting virgin and recycled materials. Although the GHG emission factors are a product of the electricity fuel mix and the carbon coefficients of fuels, the methodology in this chapter is based only on energy consumption; therefore, the energy required for the total process to make one ton of a particular material is the sum of energy consumed across all fuel types.

The total energy, or embodied energy, required to manufacture each material comprises two components: (1) process and transportation energy, and (2) embedded energy (i.e., energy content of the raw material). The first component, to process and transport a material, is conceptually straightforward; but the second component, embedded energy, is more complex. Embedded energy is the energy inherently contained in the raw materials used to manufacture a product. For example, the embedded energy of plastics comes from the petroleum used to make them. Because petroleum has an inherent energy value, the amount of energy that is saved through plastic recycling and source reduction is directly related to the energy that could have been produced if the petroleum had been used as an energy source rather than as a raw material input. Another example is aluminum, which includes an embedded energy component. The aluminum smelting process requires a carbon anode, which is consumed during the electrolytic reduction process; carbon anodes are made from coal, itself an energy source. Additional examples are carpet and electronics that contain embedded energy in their plastic and aluminum components. Total energy values also include both nonrenewable and renewable sources. For example, some aspects of the paper life-cycle include renewable fuel sources that have little effect on GHG emissions.

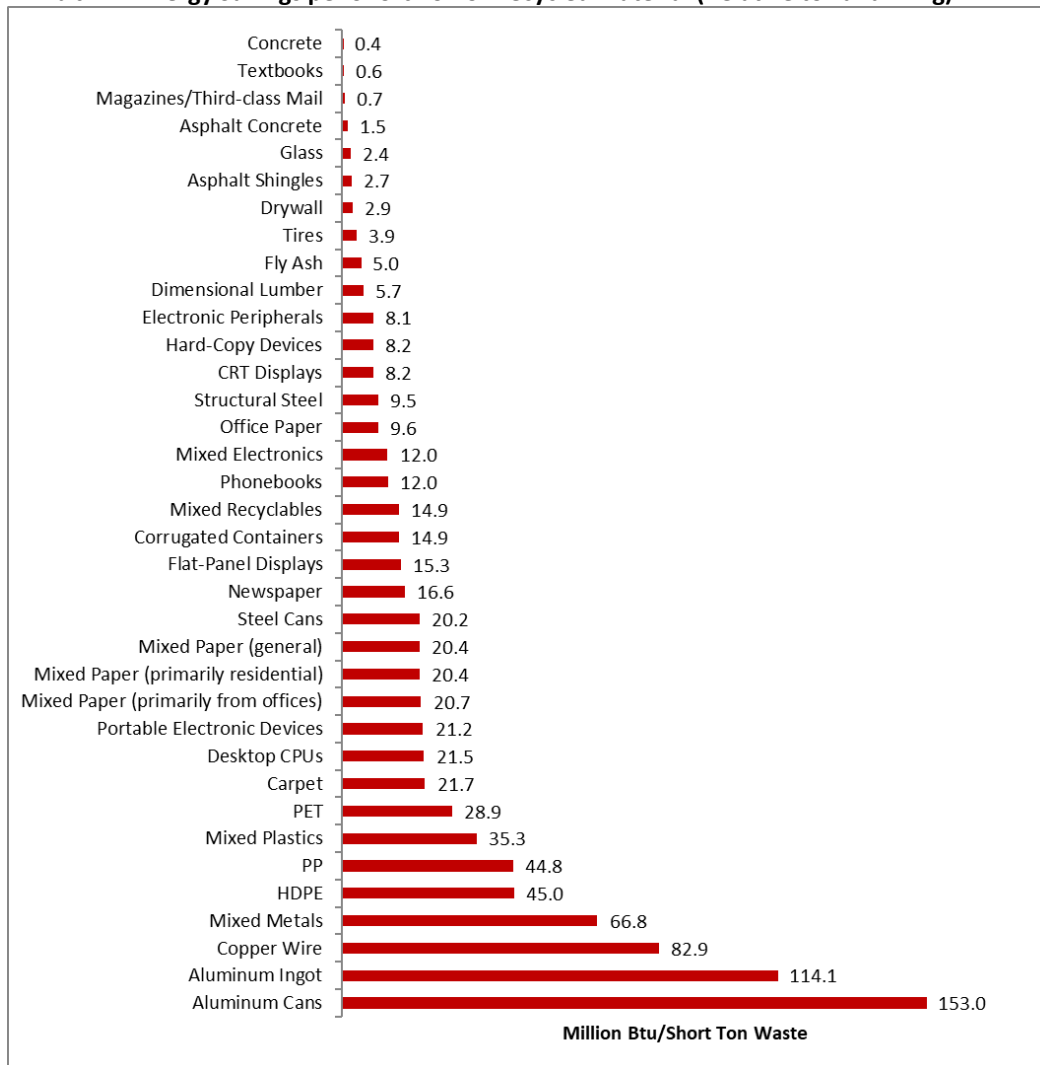
### 7.2 ENERGY IMPLICATIONS FOR WASTE MANAGEMENT OPTIONS

This chapter discusses the life-cycle energy implications for four management scenarios. As with the GHG emission factors discussed in other chapters, negative values indicate net energy savings.

Waste reduction efforts, such as source reduction and recycling, can result in significant energy savings. Source reduction techniques, such as double-sided copying, reducing the weight of products (light-weighting), and reducing generation of food waste are, in most cases, more effective at reducing energy than recycling because source reduction significantly lowers energy consumption associated with raw material extraction and manufacturing processes.

In relating recycling to landfill disposal, the greatest energy savings per ton come from aluminum cans, as shown in Exhibit 7-1. The savings reflect the nature of aluminum production—manufacturing aluminum cans from virgin inputs is very energy intensive, whereas relatively little energy is required to manufacture cans from recycled aluminum. Significant energy savings also result from recycling carpet because the recycled material can be used to produce secondary goods, and thus avoiding the energy-intensive processes required to manufacture those secondary goods.

**Exhibit 7-1: Energy Savings per Short Ton of Recycled Material (Relative to Landfilling)**



Note: This figure excludes materials in WARM for which recycling is not a viable end-of-life management option.

### 7.3 APPLYING ENERGY FACTORS

Fuels and energy are limited and expensive resources, and it is increasingly important to examine the effects of waste management practices on energy. Organizations can use the energy factors presented in Exhibit 7-6 through Exhibit 7-12 to quantify energy savings associated with waste management practices. Organizations can use these comparisons to weigh the benefits of switching from landfilling to another waste management option. For example, researchers used the comparisons to evaluate the benefits of voluntary programs aimed at source reduction and recycling, such as EPA’s WasteWise and Pay-as-You-Throw programs. Additional information about the methodology of deriving and applying these factors is available in the chapters on individual materials.

To apply the WARM energy factors, two scenarios are necessary: (1) a baseline scenario that represents current management practices (e.g., disposing of one ton of steel cans in a landfill), and (2) an alternative scenario that represents the alternative management practice (e.g., recycling a ton of steel cans).<sup>35</sup> With these scenarios, it is possible to calculate the amount of energy consumed or avoided in the baseline and alternative management practices and then to calculate the difference between the alternative scenario and the baseline scenario. The result represents the energy consumed or avoided that is attributable to the alternative management scenario.

Exhibit 7-2 illustrates the application of these factors. The baseline management scenario in the example uses disposal in a landfill that has national average conditions. The Btu number represents the amount of energy required to transport and process the ton. The alternate scenario is based on recycling the ton of cans. The difference, shown as a negative number, indicates that recycling one ton of steel cans rather than landfilling them reduces the energy consumed by 20.23 million Btu.

**Exhibit 7-2: Comparison of Waste Reduction Scenarios**

<b>Baseline:</b> landfill 1 ton of steel cans	1 ton x 0.27 million Btu/ton = 0.27 million Btu
<b>Alternate:</b> recycle 1 ton of steel cans	1 ton x -19.97 million Btu/ton = -19.97 million Btu
<b>Energy Impacts:</b>	-19.97 million Btu - 0.53 million Btu = - 20.23 million Btu

Note: Negative numbers indicate avoided emissions or energy savings.

### 7.4 RELATING ENERGY SAVINGS TO GHG BENEFITS

Because it can be difficult to conceptualize energy savings in Btu and GHG emissions reductions in metric ton carbon dioxide equivalent (MTCO<sub>2</sub>E), the common way to express the amount, the results can be converted to common equivalents such as barrels of crude oil or gallons of gasoline, as shown in Exhibit 7-3. These interpreted results produce important nuances, particularly when applied to convert MTCO<sub>2</sub>E savings to equivalent energy savings. The conversion is complicated for two reasons: (1) GHG reductions reflect both energy and non-energy savings, and (2) the energy savings reflect savings across a range of fossil fuels. Thus, conversions from total GHG reductions to an equivalency for barrels of oil must be done with caution.

<sup>35</sup> The energy factors are expressed in terms of million Btu of energy per short ton of material managed. In the case of recycling, EPA defines one ton of material managed as one ton *collected* for recycling.

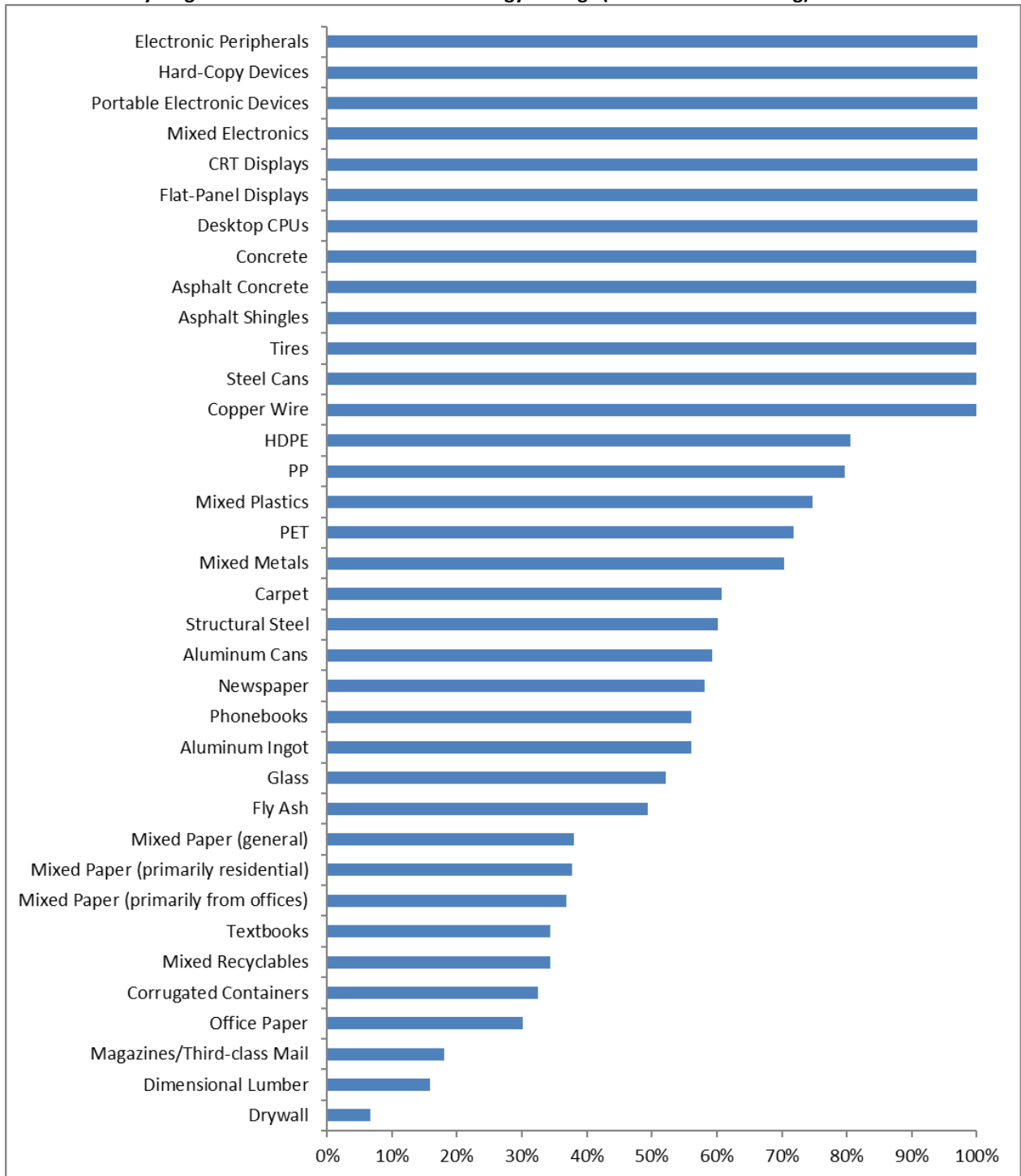


**Exhibit 7-3: Common Energy Conversion Factors and Emissions Equivalencies**

Common Energy Conversion Factors	Emissions Equivalencies
<p><b>Fuel:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Million Btu per Barrel of Oil: 5.8</li> <li>• Gallons per Barrel of Oil: 42</li> <li>• Million Btu per Gallon of Gasoline: 0.12</li> </ul> <p><b>Cars (average passenger car over one year):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fuel Consumption (gallons of gas): 529</li> <li>• Fuel Consumption (Million Btu/year): 66</li> </ul> <p><b>Household (average household per year):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Million Btu per day: 0.32</li> </ul> <p>Source: EPA, 2018</p>	<p><b>Propane Cylinders Used for Home BBQs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per cylinder (metric tons): 0.02</li> </ul> <p><b>Railroad Cars Worth of Coal:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per Railcar (metric tons): 183.29</li> </ul> <p><b>Cars (average passenger car over one year):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions (metric tons): 4.71</li> </ul> <p>Source: EPA, 2018</p>

Although energy savings are often associated with GHG emissions savings, it is inaccurate to directly convert overall GHG emission benefits into energy savings equivalents. Equivalencies must remain consistent within the energy category or the GHG emission context in which they were created. Exhibit 7-4 illustrates GHG benefits derived from energy savings achieved through recycling relative to landfilling. For example, for asphalt shingles, 100 percent of the GHG savings associated with recycling rather than landfilling are energy-related, whereas for glass, only about half of the GHG savings are energy-related. Because the GHG benefits of glass recycling consist of some energy and some non-energy-related savings, this material type demonstrates the difficulties of converting GHG savings to energy equivalents.

**Exhibit 7-4: Recycling GHG Benefits Attributable to Energy Savings (Relative to Landfilling)**



Note: This figure excludes materials in WARM for which recycling is not a viable end-of-life management option.

Exhibit 7-5 shows how energy savings and GHG savings can differ for a single scenario. The example is for total derived GHG benefits from recycling glass and the conversion of energy savings is to barrels of oil. Using the common equivalency factors, the GHG emission benefits are equivalent to GHG emissions from the combustion of 70 barrels of oil. In contrast, the energy savings associated with recycling glass are equivalent to the energy content of 41 barrels of oil.

#### Exhibit 7-5: Comparison of Emissions and Energy Benefits from Recycling

Recycling 100 Short Tons of Glass Compared to Landfilling	
<b>GHG Emission Benefits:</b> 30 MTCO <sub>2</sub> E	Equivalent to the combustion emissions from <b>70</b> barrels of oil.
<b>Energy Savings:</b> 239 Million Btu	Equivalent to the energy contained in <b>41</b> barrels of oil.

The difference between the benefits and the conversions has important implications. The term “energy savings” covers a diverse mix of fuels (petroleum, electricity, natural gas, coal). In reality, glass manufacturing depends mainly on energy produced from electricity, coal, and natural gas, not from petroleum. The equivalency, stated as “barrels of oil,” is only a simplified and recognizable energy equivalent; little or no petroleum is actually saved.

Exhibit 7-6, Exhibit 7-7, Exhibit 7-8,

Exhibit 7-9, Exhibit 7-10, and Exhibit 7-11 show the components of the energy impact factors for source reduction, recycling, combustion, composting, anaerobic digestion, and landfilling, respectively. Exhibit 7-12 shows the net energy impacts of the six materials management options.

#### Exhibit 7-6: Energy Impacts for Source Reduction (Million Btu/Ton of Material Source Reduced)

(a) Material	(b) Raw Materials Acquisition and Manufacturing Process Energy		(c) Raw Materials Acquisition and Manufacturing Transport Energy		(d) Net Energy (d = b + c)	
	Displace Current Mix of Virgin and Recycled Inputs	Displace Virgin Inputs	Displace Current Mix of Virgin and Recycled Inputs	Displace Virgin Inputs	Displace Current Mix of Virgin and Recycled Inputs	Displace Virgin Inputs
Aluminum Cans	(88.74)	(199.30)	(0.95)	(1.27)	(89.69)	(200.57)
Aluminum Ingot	(126.03)	(126.03)	(0.92)	(0.92)	(126.95)	(126.95)
Steel Cans	(25.11)	(31.58)	(4.78)	(4.96)	(29.88)	(36.54)
Copper Wire	(121.45)	(122.52)	(0.91)	(0.82)	(122.36)	(123.35)
Glass	(5.99)	(6.49)	(0.91)	(0.97)	(6.90)	(7.46)
HDPE	(57.93)	(63.71)	(3.19)	(3.28)	(61.12)	(66.99)
LDPE	(67.59)	(67.59)	(3.33)	(3.33)	(70.92)	(70.92)
PET	(48.46)	(49.59)	(1.56)	(1.54)	(50.02)	(51.13)
LLDPE	(62.98)	(62.98)	(3.30)	(3.30)	(66.29)	(66.29)
PP	(63.01)	(63.59)	(2.90)	(2.90)	(65.91)	(66.49)
PS	(71.95)	(71.95)	(2.90)	(2.90)	(74.85)	(74.85)
PVC	(46.14)	(46.14)	(2.00)	(2.00)	(48.14)	(48.14)
PLA	(29.38)	(29.38)	(0.71)	(0.71)	(30.09)	(30.09)
Corrugated Containers	(20.45)	(25.13)	(1.87)	(2.05)	(22.32)	(27.18)
Magazines/Third-class Mail	(32.95)	(32.99)	(0.28)	(0.28)	(33.23)	(33.27)
Newspaper	(35.80)	(39.92)	(0.67)	(0.78)	(36.46)	(40.70)
Office Paper	(36.32)	(37.01)	(0.28)	(0.28)	(36.60)	(37.29)
Phonebooks	(39.61)	(39.61)	(0.59)	(0.59)	(40.20)	(40.20)
Textbooks	(35.01)	(35.07)	(0.59)	(0.59)	(35.60)	(35.66)
Dimensional Lumber	(7.06)	(7.06)	NA	NA	(7.06)	(7.06)
Medium-density Fiberboard	(21.66)	(21.66)	(0.73)	(0.73)	(22.39)	(22.39)

(a)  Material	(b) Raw Materials Acquisition and Manufacturing Process Energy		(c) Raw Materials Acquisition and Manufacturing Transport Energy		(d) Net Energy (d = b + c)	
	Displace Current Mix of Virgin and Recycled Inputs	Displace Virgin Inputs	Displace Current Mix of Virgin and Recycled Inputs	Displace Virgin Inputs	Displace Current Mix of Virgin and Recycled Inputs	Displace Virgin Inputs
Food Waste	(12.81)	(12.81)	(1.75)	(1.75)	(14.56)	(14.56)
Food Waste (meat only)	(40.86)	(40.86)	(2.74)	(2.74)	(43.60)	(43.60)
Food Waste (non-meat)	(5.71)	(5.71)	(1.50)	(1.50)	(7.20)	(7.20)
Beef	(62.25)	(62.25)	(1.63)	(1.63)	(63.88)	(63.88)
Poultry	(22.80)	(22.80)	(3.68)	(3.68)	(26.48)	(26.48)
Grains	(5.35)	(5.35)	(0.29)	(0.29)	(5.64)	(5.64)
Bread	(6.34)	(6.34)	(0.18)	(0.18)	(6.52)	(6.52)
Fruits and Vegetables	(2.95)	(2.95)	(2.12)	(2.12)	(5.07)	(5.07)
Dairy Products	(13.61)	(13.61)	(0.65)	(0.65)	(14.27)	(14.27)
Yard Trimmings	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Grass	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Leaves	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Branches	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Mixed Paper (general)	(28.31)	(31.68)	(1.14)	(1.25)	(29.44)	(32.93)
Mixed Paper (primarily residential)	(27.45)	(30.98)	(1.21)	(1.33)	(28.66)	(32.31)
Mixed Paper (primarily from offices)	(34.20)	(35.58)	(0.44)	(0.47)	(34.64)	(36.05)
Mixed Metals	(47.43)	(90.41)	(3.43)	(3.67)	(50.86)	(94.08)
Mixed Plastics	(52.22)	(55.20)	(2.21)	(2.23)	(54.43)	(57.43)
Mixed Recyclables	(23.37)	(28.34)	(1.42)	(1.56)	NA	NA
Mixed Organics	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Mixed MSW	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Carpet	(89.70)	(89.70)	(1.36)	(1.36)	(91.06)	(91.06)
Desktop CPUs	(130.53)	(130.53)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(130.63)	(130.63)
Portable Electronic Devices	(163.16)	(163.16)	(0.19)	(0.19)	(163.36)	(163.36)
Flat-panel Displays	(125.51)	(125.51)	(0.16)	(0.16)	(125.66)	(125.66)
CRT Displays	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Electronic Peripherals	(105.42)	(105.42)	(0.59)	(0.59)	(106.00)	(106.00)
Hard-copy Devices	(72.12)	(72.12)	(0.41)	(0.41)	(72.53)	(72.53)
Mixed Electronics	(119.49)	(119.49)	(0.22)	(0.22)	(119.70)	(119.70)
Clay Bricks	(5.10)	(5.10)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(5.13)	(5.13)
Concrete	NA	(0.05)	NA	(0.19)	NA	NA
Fly Ash	NA	(4.77)	NA	(0.10)	NA	NA
Tires	(71.14)	(73.79)	(0.57)	(0.54)	(71.71)	(74.33)
Asphalt Concrete	(0.94)	(0.94)	(0.73)	(0.73)	(1.68)	(1.68)
Asphalt Shingles	(2.15)	(2.15)	(0.96)	(0.96)	(3.11)	(3.11)
Drywall	(3.08)	(3.08)	(0.48)	(0.48)	(3.56)	(3.56)
Fiberglass Insulation	(3.96)	(4.73)	(0.77)	(0.83)	(4.73)	(5.56)
Structural Steel	(15.30)	(23.34)	(0.60)	(1.80)	(15.90)	(25.15)
Vinyl Flooring	(9.34)	(9.34)	(1.26)	(1.26)	(10.60)	(10.60)
Wood Flooring	(7.55)	(7.55)	(2.59)	(2.59)	(10.14)	(10.14)

Note: Negative numbers = Energy savings. NA = Not applicable.

**Exhibit 7-7: Energy Impacts for Recycling (Million Btu/Ton of Material Recycled)**

(a) Material	(b) Recycled Input Credit - Process Energy	(c) Recycled Input Credit - Transportation Energy	(d) Net Energy (Post-Consumer) (d = b + c)
Aluminum Cans	(152.32)	(0.44)	(152.76)
Aluminum Ingot	(113.53)	(0.32)	(113.85)
Steel Cans	(19.40)	(0.56)	(19.97)
Copper Wire	(81.64)	(0.95)	(82.59)
Glass	(1.91)	(0.21)	(2.13)
HDPE	(44.11)	(0.67)	(44.78)
LDPE	NA	NA	NA
PET	(29.01)	0.42	(28.59)
LLDPE	NA	NA	NA
PP	(44.33)	(0.17)	(44.50)
PS	NA	NA	NA
PVC	NA	NA	NA
PLA	NA	NA	NA
Corrugated Containers	(14.37)	(0.73)	(15.10)
Magazines/Third-Class Mail	(0.69)	-	(0.69)
Newspaper	(16.07)	(0.42)	(16.49)
Office Paper	(10.08)	-	(10.08)
Phonebooks	(11.93)	-	(11.93)
Textbooks	(1.03)	-	(1.03)
Dimensional Lumber <sup>a</sup>	(5.21)	-	(5.21)
Medium-density Fiberboard	NA	NA	NA
Food Waste	NA	NA	NA
Food Waste (meat only)	NA	NA	NA
Food Waste (non-meat)	NA	NA	NA
Beef	NA	NA	NA
Poultry	NA	NA	NA
Grains	NA	NA	NA
Bread	NA	NA	NA
Fruits and Vegetables	NA	NA	NA
Dairy Products	NA	NA	NA
Yard Trimmings	NA	NA	NA
Grass	NA	NA	NA
Leaves	NA	NA	NA
Branches	NA	NA	NA
Mixed Paper (general)	(19.14)	(1.43)	(20.56)
Mixed Paper (primarily residential)	(19.14)	(1.43)	(20.56)
Mixed Paper (primarily from offices)	(19.39)	(1.46)	(20.85)
Mixed Metals	(66.03)	(0.52)	(66.55)
Mixed Plastics	(35.01)	(0.01)	(35.02)
Mixed Recyclables	(14.46)	(0.49)	(14.94)
Mixed Organics	NA	NA	NA
Mixed MSW	NA	NA	NA
Carpet	(21.83)	0.36	(21.46)
Desktop CPUs	(21.27)	0.06	(21.21)
Portable Electronic Devices	(21.08)	0.13	(20.95)
Flat-panel Displays	(15.24)	0.17	(15.07)
CRT Displays	(7.98)	0.04	(7.95)
Electronic Peripherals	(8.10)	0.22	(7.88)
Hard-Copy Devices	(7.90)	(0.02)	(7.91)
Mixed Electronics	(14.12)	0.11	(14.02)
Clay Bricks	NA	NA	NA

(a) Material	(b) Recycled Input Credit - Process Energy	(c) Recycled Input Credit - Transportation Energy	(d) Net Energy (Post-Consumer) (d = b + c)
Concrete	(0.01)	(0.09)	(0.11)
Fly Ash	(4.77)	-	(4.77)
Tires	(4.99)	1.39	(3.60)
Asphalt Concrete	(0.53)	(0.69)	(1.22)
Asphalt Shingles	(1.96)	(0.45)	(2.41)
Drywall	(2.11)	(0.49)	(2.60)
Fiberglass Insulation	NA	NA	NA
Structural Steel	(8.05)	(1.20)	(9.25)
Vinyl Flooring	NA	NA	NA
Wood Flooring <sup>a</sup>	(5.69)	(2.31)	(7.99)

Note: Negative energy impacts = Energy savings. NA = Not applicable.

<sup>a</sup> Modeled as Reuse in WARM.

**Exhibit 7-8: Energy Impacts for Combustion (Million Btu/Ton of Material Combusted)**

(a) Material	(b) Electric Utility Fuel Consumption	(c) Energy Impacts due to Steel Recovery	(d) Transportation to Combustion Facility	(e) Net Energy (Post-Consumer) (e = b + c + d)
Aluminum Cans	0.32	NA	0.00	0.32
Aluminum Ingot	0.32	NA	0.00	0.32
Steel Cans	0.20	(17.61)	0.00	(17.41)
Copper Wire	0.26	NA	0.00	0.26
Glass	0.22	NA	0.00	0.22
HDPE	(18.83)	NA	0.00	(18.83)
LDPE	(18.72)	NA	0.00	(18.72)
PET	(9.99)	NA	0.00	(9.99)
LLDPE	(18.79)	NA	0.00	(18.79)
PP	(18.79)	NA	0.00	(18.79)
PS	(16.96)	NA	0.00	(16.96)
PVC	(7.42)	NA	0.00	(7.42)
PLA	(7.88)	NA	0.00	(7.88)
Corrugated Containers	(6.63)	NA	0.00	(6.63)
Magazines/Third-class Mail	(4.95)	NA	0.00	(4.95)
Newspaper	(7.49)	NA	0.00	(7.49)
Office Paper	(6.41)	NA	0.00	(6.41)
Phonebooks	(7.49)	NA	0.00	(7.49)
Textbooks	(6.41)	NA	0.00	(6.41)
Dimensional Lumber	(7.82)	NA	0.00	(7.82)
Medium-density Fiberboard	(7.82)	NA	0.00	(7.82)
Food Waste	(2.23)	NA	0.00	(2.23)
Food Waste (meat only)	(2.23)	NA	0.00	(2.23)
Food Waste (non-meat)	(2.23)	NA	0.00	(2.23)
Beef	(2.23)	NA	0.00	(2.23)
Poultry	(2.23)	NA	0.00	(2.23)
Grains	(2.23)	NA	0.00	(2.23)
Bread	(2.23)	NA	0.00	(2.23)
Fruits and Vegetables	(2.23)	NA	0.00	(2.23)
Dairy Products	(2.23)	NA	0.00	(2.23)
Yard Trimmings	(2.64)	NA	0.00	(2.64)
Grass	(2.64)	NA	0.00	(2.64)
Leaves	(2.64)	NA	0.00	(2.64)

(a) Material	(b) Electric Utility Fuel Consumption	(c) Energy Impacts due to Steel Recovery	(d) Transportation to Combustion Facility	(e) Net Energy (Post-Consumer) (e = b + c + d)
Branches	(2.64)	NA	0.00	(2.64)
Mixed Paper (general)	(6.66)	NA	0.00	(6.66)
Mixed Paper (primarily residential)	(6.63)	NA	0.00	(6.63)
Mixed Paper (primarily from offices)	(6.12)	NA	0.00	(6.12)
Mixed Metals	0.24	(11.43)	0.00	(11.19)
Mixed Plastics	(13.50)	NA	0.00	(13.50)
Mixed Recyclables	(6.18)	(0.43)	0.00	(6.61)
Mixed Organics	(2.42)	NA	0.00	(2.42)
Mixed MSW	(4.71)	NA	0.00	(4.71)
Carpet	(7.16)	NA	0.00	(7.16)
Desktop CPUs	(1.44)	(10.32)	0.00	(11.76)
Portable Electronic Devices	(1.44)	(1.29)	0.00	(2.73)
Flat-panel Displays	(1.44)	(6.51)	0.00	(7.96)
CRT Displays	(1.44)	(0.85)	0.00	(2.30)
Electronic Peripherals	(1.44)	(0.37)	0.00	(1.82)
Hard-copy Devices	(1.44)	(6.58)	0.00	(8.03)
Mixed Electronics	(1.44)	(5.45)	0.00	(6.89)
Clay Bricks	NA	NA	NA	NA
Concrete	NA	NA	NA	NA
Fly Ash	NA	NA	NA	NA
Tires	(27.78)	(1.01)	0.00	(28.79)
Asphalt Concrete	NA	NA	NA	NA
Asphalt Shingles	(8.80)	NA	0.00	(8.80)
Drywall	NA	NA	NA	NA
Fiberglass Insulation	NA	NA	NA	NA
Structural Steel	NA	NA	NA	NA
Vinyl Flooring	(7.42)	NA	0.00	(7.42)
Wood Flooring	(10.23)	NA	0.00	(10.23)

Note: Negative energy impacts = Energy savings. NA = Not applicable.

#### Exhibit 7-9: Energy Impacts for Composting (Million Btu/Ton of Material Composted)

Material	Transportation and Turning Energy (Post-Consumer)
Aluminum Cans	NA
Aluminum Ingot	NA
Steel Cans	NA
Copper Wire	NA
Glass	NA
HDPE	NA
LDPE	NA
PET	NA
LLDPE	NA
PP	NA
PS	NA
PVC	NA
PLA	0.51
Corrugated Containers	NA
Magazines/Third-class Mail	NA
Newspaper	NA
Office Paper	NA
Phonebooks	NA
Textbooks	NA

<b>Material</b>	<b>Transportation and Turning Energy (Post-Consumer)</b>
Dimensional Lumber	NA
Medium-density Fiberboard	NA
Food Waste	0.73
Food Waste (meat only)	0.73
Food Waste (non-meat)	0.73
Beef	0.73
Poultry	0.73
Grains	0.73
Bread	0.73
Fruits and Vegetables	0.73
Dairy Products	0.73
Yard Trimmings	0.26
Grass	0.26
Leaves	0.26
Branches	0.26
Mixed Paper (general)	NA
Mixed Paper (primarily residential)	NA
Mixed Paper (primarily from offices)	NA
Mixed Metals	NA
Mixed Plastics	NA
Mixed Recyclables	NA
Mixed Organics	0.51
Mixed MSW	NA
Carpet	NA
Desktop CPUs	NA
Portable Electronic Devices	NA
Flat-panel Displays	NA
CRT Displays	NA
Electronic Peripherals	NA
Hard-copy Devices	NA
Mixed Electronics	NA
Clay Bricks	NA
Concrete	NA
Fly Ash	NA
Tires	NA
Asphalt Concrete	NA
Asphalt Shingles	NA
Drywall	NA
Fiberglass Insulation	NA
Structural Steel	NA
Vinyl Flooring	NA
Wood Flooring	NA

Note: Negative energy impacts = Energy savings. NA = Not applicable.



**Exhibit 7-10: Energy Impacts for Anaerobic Digestion (Million Btu/Ton of Material Digested)**

(a) Material	(b) Process Energy	(c) Transportation Energy to Digester	(d) Avoided Utility Energy	(e) Net Energy (Post-Consumer) (e = b + c + d)
Aluminum Cans	NA	NA	NA	NA
Aluminum Ingot	NA	NA	NA	NA
Steel Cans	NA	NA	NA	NA
Copper Wire	NA	NA	NA	NA
Glass	NA	NA	NA	NA
HDPE	NA	NA	NA	NA
LDPE	NA	NA	NA	NA
PET	NA	NA	NA	NA
LLDPE	NA	NA	NA	NA
PP	NA	NA	NA	NA
PS	NA	NA	NA	NA
PVC	NA	NA	NA	NA
PLA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Corrugated Containers	NA	NA	NA	NA
Magazines/Third-class Mail	NA	NA	NA	NA
Newspaper	NA	NA	NA	NA
Office Paper	NA	NA	NA	NA
Phonebooks	NA	NA	NA	NA
Textbooks	NA	NA	NA	NA
Dimensional Lumber	NA	NA	NA	NA
Medium-density Fiberboard	NA	NA	NA	NA
Food Waste	0.26	0.04	(0.66)	(0.36)
Food Waste (meat only)	0.26	0.04	(0.66)	(0.36)
Food Waste (non-meat)	0.26	0.04	(0.66)	(0.36)
Beef	0.26	0.04	(0.66)	(0.36)
Poultry	0.26	0.04	(0.66)	(0.36)
Grains	0.26	0.04	(0.66)	(0.36)
Bread	0.26	0.04	(0.66)	(0.36)
Fruits and Vegetables	0.26	0.04	(0.66)	(0.36)
Dairy Products	0.26	0.04	(0.66)	(0.36)
Yard Trimmings	0.29	0.04	(0.19)	0.14
Grass	0.26	0.04	(0.18)	0.12
Leaves	0.31	0.04	(0.10)	0.24
Branches	0.32	0.04	(0.28)	0.08
Mixed Paper (general)	NA	NA	NA	NA
Mixed Paper (primarily residential)	NA	NA	NA	NA
Mixed Paper (primarily from offices)	NA	NA	NA	NA
Mixed Metals	NA	NA	NA	NA
Mixed Plastics	NA	NA	NA	NA
Mixed Recyclables	NA	NA	NA	NA
Mixed Organics	0.27	0.04	(0.44)	(0.13)
Mixed MSW	NA	NA	NA	NA
Carpet	NA	NA	NA	NA
Desktop CPUs	NA	NA	NA	NA
Portable Electronic Devices	NA	NA	NA	NA
Flat-panel Displays	NA	NA	NA	NA
CRT Displays	NA	NA	NA	NA
Electronic Peripherals	NA	NA	NA	NA
Hard-copy Devices	NA	NA	NA	NA
Mixed Electronics	NA	NA	NA	NA
Clay Bricks	NA	NA	NA	NA

(a) Material	(b) Process Energy	(c) Transportation Energy to Digester	(d) Avoided Utility Energy	(e) Net Energy (Post-Consumer) (e = b + c + d)
Concrete	NA	NA	NA	NA
Fly Ash	NA	NA	NA	NA
Tires	NA	NA	NA	NA
Asphalt Concrete	NA	NA	NA	NA
Asphalt Shingles	NA	NA	NA	NA
Drywall	NA	NA	NA	NA
Fiberglass Insulation	NA	NA	NA	NA
Structural Steel	NA	NA	NA	NA
Vinyl Flooring	NA	NA	NA	NA
Wood Flooring	NA	NA	NA	NA

Note: Negative energy impacts = Energy savings. NA = Not applicable.

Assumes dry digestion with digestate curing and national average utility grid mix.

**Exhibit 7-11: Energy Impacts for Landfilling (Million Btu/Ton of Material Landfilled)**

(a) Material	(b) Transportation to Landfill	(c) Electric Utility Fuel Consumption	(d) Net Energy (Post-Consumer) (d = b + c)
Aluminum Cans	0.27	NA	0.27
Aluminum Ingot	0.27	NA	0.27
Steel Cans	0.27	NA	0.27
Copper Wire	0.27	NA	0.27
Glass	0.27	NA	0.27
HDPE	0.27	NA	0.27
LDPE	0.27	NA	0.27
PET	0.27	NA	0.27
LLDPE	0.27	NA	0.27
PP	0.27	NA	0.27
PS	0.27	NA	0.27
PVC	0.27	NA	0.27
PLA	0.27	NA	0.27
Corrugated Containers	0.27	(0.48)	(0.21)
Magazines/Third-class Mail	0.27	(0.21)	0.06
Newspaper	0.27	(0.20)	0.07
Office Paper	0.27	(0.74)	(0.47)
Phonebooks	0.27	(0.20)	0.07
Textbooks	0.27	(0.74)	(0.47)
Dimensional Lumber	0.27	(0.00)	0.27
Medium-density Fiberboard	0.27	(0.00)	0.27
Food Waste	0.27	(0.29)	(0.02)
Food Waste (meat only)	0.27	(0.29)	(0.02)
Food Waste (non-meat)	0.27	(0.28)	(0.02)
Beef	0.27	(0.27)	(0.00)
Poultry	0.27	(0.31)	(0.04)
Grains	0.27	(0.89)	(0.62)
Bread	0.27	(0.64)	(0.37)
Fruits and Vegetables	0.27	(0.11)	0.15
Dairy Products	0.27	(0.30)	(0.03)
Yard Trimmings	0.27	(0.12)	0.15
Grass	0.27	(0.08)	0.19
Leaves	0.27	(0.10)	0.16

(a) Material	(b) Transportation to Landfill	(c) Electric Utility Fuel Consumption	(d) Net Energy (Post-Consumer) (d = b + c)
Branches	0.27	(0.25)	0.01
Mixed Paper (general)	0.27	(0.44)	(0.17)
Mixed Paper (primarily residential)	0.27	(0.42)	(0.15)
Mixed Paper (primarily from offices)	0.27	(0.42)	(0.15)
Mixed Metals	0.27	NA	0.27
Mixed Plastics	0.27	NA	0.27
Mixed Recyclables	0.27	(0.32)	(0.05)
Mixed Organics	0.27	(0.21)	0.06
Mixed MSW	0.27	(0.31)	(0.05)
Carpet	0.27	NA	0.27
Desktop CPUs	0.27	NA	0.27
Portable Electronic Devices	0.27	NA	0.27
Flat-panel Displays	0.27	NA	0.27
CRT Displays	0.27	NA	0.27
Electronic Peripherals	0.27	NA	0.27
Hard-copy Devices	0.27	NA	0.27
Mixed Electronics	0.27	NA	0.27
Clay Bricks	0.27	NA	0.27
Concrete	0.27	NA	0.27
Fly Ash	0.27	NA	0.27
Tires	0.27	NA	0.27
Asphalt Concrete	0.27	NA	0.27
Asphalt Shingles	0.27	NA	0.27
Drywall	0.27	NA	0.27
Fiberglass Insulation	0.27	NA	0.27
Structural Steel	0.27	NA	0.27
Vinyl Flooring	0.27	NA	0.27
Wood Flooring	0.27	NA	0.27

Note: Negative energy impacts = Energy savings. NA = Not applicable.

**Exhibit 7-12: Net Energy Impacts from Source Reduction and MSW Management Options (Million Btu/Ton)**

Material	Source Reduction for Current Mix of Inputs	Recycling	Combustion	Composting	Anaerobic Digestion	Landfilling
Aluminum Cans	(89.69)	(152.76)	0.32	NA	NA	0.27
Aluminum Ingot	(126.95)	(113.85)	0.32	NA	NA	0.27
Steel Cans	(29.88)	(19.97)	(17.41)	NA	NA	0.27
Copper Wire	(122.36)	(82.59)	0.26	NA	NA	0.27
Glass	(6.90)	(2.13)	0.22	NA	NA	0.27
HDPE	(61.12)	(44.78)	(18.83)	NA	NA	0.27
LDPE	(70.92)	NA	(18.72)	NA	NA	0.27
PET	(50.02)	(28.59)	(9.99)	NA	NA	0.27
LLDPE	(66.29)	NA	(18.79)	NA	NA	0.27
PP	(65.91)	(44.50)	(18.79)	NA	NA	0.27
PS	(74.85)	NA	(16.96)	NA	NA	0.27
PVC	(48.14)	NA	(7.42)	NA	NA	0.27
PLA	(30.09)	NA	(7.88)	0.51	NA	0.27
Corrugated Containers	(22.32)	(15.10)	(6.63)	NA	NA	(0.21)
Magazines/Third-class Mail	(33.23)	(0.69)	(4.95)	NA	NA	0.06
Newspaper	(36.46)	(16.49)	(7.49)	NA	NA	0.07

Material	Source Reduction for Current Mix of Inputs	Recycling	Combustion	Composting	Anaerobic Digestion	Landfilling
Office Paper	(36.60)	(10.08)	(6.41)	NA	NA	(0.47)
Phonebooks	(40.20)	(11.93)	(7.49)	NA	NA	0.07
Textbooks	(35.60)	(1.03)	(6.41)	NA	NA	(0.47)
Dimensional Lumber <sup>a</sup>	(7.06)	(5.21)	(7.82)	NA	NA	0.27
Medium-density Fiberboard	(22.39)	NA	(7.82)	NA	NA	0.27
Food Waste	(14.56)	NA	(2.23)	0.73	(0.36)	(0.02)
Food Waste (meat only)	(43.60)	NA	(2.23)	0.73	(0.36)	(0.02)
Food Waste (non-meat)	(7.20)	NA	(2.23)	0.73	(0.36)	(0.02)
Beef	(63.88)	NA	(2.23)	0.73	(0.36)	(0.00)
Poultry	(26.48)	NA	(2.23)	0.73	(0.36)	(0.04)
Grains	(5.64)	NA	(2.23)	0.73	(0.36)	(0.62)
Bread	(6.52)	NA	(2.23)	0.73	(0.36)	(0.37)
Fruits and Vegetables	(5.07)	NA	(2.23)	0.73	(0.36)	0.15
Dairy Products	(14.27)	NA	(2.23)	0.73	(0.36)	(0.03)
Yard Trimmings	NA	NA	(2.64)	0.26	0.14	0.15
Grass	NA	NA	(2.64)	0.26	0.12	0.19
Leaves	NA	NA	(2.64)	0.26	0.24	0.16
Branches	NA	NA	(2.64)	0.26	0.08	0.01
Mixed Paper (general)	(29.44)	(20.56)	(6.66)	NA	NA	(0.17)
Mixed Paper (primarily residential)	(28.66)	(20.56)	(6.63)	NA	NA	(0.15)
Mixed Paper (primarily from offices)	(34.64)	(20.85)	(6.12)	NA	NA	(0.15)
Mixed Metals	(50.86)	(66.55)	(11.19)	NA	NA	0.27
Mixed Plastics	(54.43)	(35.02)	(13.50)	NA	NA	0.27
Mixed Recyclables	NA	(14.94)	(6.61)	NA	NA	(0.05)
Mixed Organics	NA	NA	(2.42)	0.51	(0.13)	0.06
Mixed MSW	NA	NA	(4.71)	NA	NA	(0.05)
Carpet	(91.06)	(21.46)	(7.16)	NA	NA	0.27
Desktop CPUs	(130.63)	(21.21)	(11.76)	NA	NA	0.27
Portable Electronic Devices	(163.36)	(20.95)	(2.73)	NA	NA	0.27
Flat-panel Displays	(125.66)	(15.07)	(7.96)	NA	NA	0.27
CRT Displays	NA	(7.95)	(2.30)	NA	NA	0.27
Electronic Peripherals	(106.00)	(7.88)	(1.82)	NA	NA	0.27
Hard-copy Devices	(72.53)	(7.91)	(8.03)	NA	NA	0.27
Mixed Electronics	(119.70)	(14.02)	(6.89)	NA	NA	0.27
Clay Bricks	(5.13)	NA	NA	NA	NA	0.27
Concrete	NA	(0.11)	NA	NA	NA	0.27
Fly Ash	NA	(4.77)	NA	NA	NA	0.27
Tires	(71.71)	(3.60)	(28.79)	NA	NA	0.27
Asphalt Concrete	(1.68)	(1.22)	NA	NA	NA	0.27
Asphalt Shingles	(3.11)	(2.41)	(8.80)	NA	NA	0.27
Drywall	(3.56)	(2.60)	NA	NA	NA	0.27
Fiberglass Insulation	(4.73)	NA	NA	NA	NA	0.27
Structural Steel	(15.90)	(9.25)	NA	NA	NA	0.27
Vinyl Flooring	(10.60)	NA	(7.42)	NA	NA	0.27
Wood Flooring <sup>a</sup>	(10.14)	(7.99)	(10.23)	NA	NA	0.27

Note: Negative energy impacts = Energy savings. NA = Not applicable.

<sup>a</sup> Modeled as Reuse in WARM.

## 7.5 REFERENCES

- EPA. (2018). Greenhouse Gas Equivalencies Calculator. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Washington, DC.
- EPA. (2006). *Solid Waste Management and Greenhouse Gases: A Life-Cycle Assessment of Emissions and Sinks*. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

## 8 ECONOMIC IMPACTS

This chapter describes the development of the economic impact factors for EPA's Waste Reduction Model (WARM). The chapter includes a summary of the economic implications of materials management (Section 8.1); a summary of the types of economic impacts considered (Section 8.2.0); a summary of the economic impact modeling methodology and output metrics incorporated into the tool (Section 8.3); detailed methodology for calculating the economic factors associated with waste management processes (i.e., waste diversion and waste disposal) and energy reduction and generation (Section 8.4); a summary of the results (Section 8.5); and a summary of the limitations (Section 8.6). To view the consolidated economic impact factor results for materials management activity and energy savings/generation, please access Section 8.5.3 of this chapter.

### 8.1 A SUMMARY OF THE ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF WASTE REDUCTION OR ALTERNATIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Prior to the release of WARM Version 15, WARM did not include potential economic benefits from waste reduction or alternative waste management practices. These various economic impacts can be a main driver in materials management decisions and are an important consideration for users hoping to manage materials more sustainably.

In recent years WARM stakeholders have acknowledged the benefit of including economic impacts as a consideration for their waste management practices as they have to assess materials management options in the context of budget considerations. For these organizations, having a better understanding of the ways in which waste management activities support jobs, wages, and tax revenue in addition to the GHG impacts could provide additional support for moving towards more sustainable management practices.

### 8.2 SUMMARY OF ECONOMIC IMPACTS

The U.S. Recycling Economic Information (REI) study—first published in 2001 (R.W. Beck 2001) and updated in 2016 (U.S. EPA 2016a) and in 2020 (U.S. EPA 2020)—provides an approach for measuring economic activity associated with recycling. This approach uses a Waste Input-Output (WIO) model built on the official Input-Output (IO) tables maintained by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA). The BEA IO tables describe the economic transactions between industries and were used in the 2020 REI report to estimate the economic activity attributable to recycling processes and activities for nine material sectors.<sup>36</sup> EPA used the estimates from the REI report to develop economic impact factors associated with the waste management practices themselves (i.e., landfilling, combustion, recycling, composting, and anaerobic digestion) for WARM.

One limitation of the 2020 REI study is that it does not account for the impact of reduced input costs and energy usage for recycled material by end users or energy generation that are otherwise captured as part of the GHG emissions and energy impacts estimated in WARM. Economic factors incorporated into the most recent version of WARM build on the findings in the 2020 REI report by quantifying the economic impacts associated with both waste management as well as the broader

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<sup>36</sup> Currently, the U.S. official IO table shows flows of transactions between industries but does not distinguish between recycling operations and recyclable material flows. Separating out the recycling activities is complicated because they are either embedded in the broader activities of a manufacturing sector or aggregated within the waste management and remediation services industry. To isolate the impact of recycling in the 2020 REI study, EPA developed a methodology to determine the presence of recycled content in final goods and the upstream impacts of the recycled content. Recycling material flows from the WIO model are cross walked with separate data tables of taxes, wages and jobs to assess the impact of recycling activities within the U.S. economy. More information on the REI factors is included in Section 8.4.1.1.

economic benefits associated with energy savings and generation (i.e., product manufacturing using recycled inputs or energy production from anaerobic digestion).

The WARM tool provides a consolidated economic benefit factor for various waste management practices and end user energy savings. The factor for each component was calculated and is discussed separately below given the different methodological approaches employed.

### **8.2.1 Economic Impacts Associated with Waste Management Processes**

Waste diversion management processes—which refer to all activity associated with recycling, composting, and anaerobic digestion—encompass a wide range of activities ranging from material collection, separation, cleaning and/or other processing (e.g., baling plastic bottles); transformation of recyclable materials into marketable products, distribution, storage and service delivery (e.g., distribution of food to and from food banks), and transportation between each stage. The waste diversion factors incorporated into WARM account for both the direct economic activity associated with the actual transformation of recyclable materials into marketable products, as well as the economic activities involved in the value chain of the direct processes such as the collection, sorting, and transportation of materials.

Activity associated with waste disposal includes the economic activity related to landfilling and combustion. These impacts are generally smaller than the impacts related to waste diversion, as waste disposal activities are not as labor intensive. Waste disposal and materials collection relies on large capital-intensive equipment to handle large waste tonnages with few employees.

### **8.2.2 Economic Impacts Associated with Energy Savings and Energy Generation**

Energy savings are typically realized when products are produced/manufactured with recycled materials rather than virgin materials. These energy savings, which lower the cost of production, are then reinvested into the manufacturing processing thereby increasing production. Similarly, when energy is produced through the process of anaerobic digestion, the electricity that is generated and used on-site at the anaerobic digestion facility, and excess electricity that is exported to the grid has a positive economic benefit.

## **8.3 SUMMARY OF ECONOMIC IMPACT MODELING METHODOLOGY, ASSUMPTIONS AND OUTPUT METRICS INCORPORATED INTO MATERIALS MANAGEMENT FOR WARM**

Regional economic modeling is founded on the principle that industry sectors are interdependent: one industry purchases inputs from other industries and households (e.g., labor) and then sells outputs to other industries, households, and government entities. Therefore, economic activity in one sector can cause an increased flow of money throughout the economy. The effect of these multiple rounds of spending constitutes the total impact.

The economic impacts of materials management practices that provide the basis for the WARM waste diversion and disposal economic factors are captured at two levels of impact—direct and indirect—as defined in the U.S. REI study published in 2001 by the National Recycling Coalition and the U.S. EPA (R.W. Beck 2001) and updated in 2016 (U.S. EPA 2016a) and in 2020 (U.S. EPA 2020). The impacts are defined below:

- **Direct impacts** are associated with the “actual transformation of recyclable materials into marketable products.”

- **Indirect impacts** include “upstream supply chain economic activity that supports recycling processes,” such as the number of employees who work for the suppliers of recycling materials and employees of other suppliers throughout the upstream supply chain (U.S. EPA 2020).

The economic impacts of energy savings and energy production are inclusive of direct, indirect, and induced impacts. Specifically, in addition to the direct impacts in primary industries where spending occurs and indirect impacts of industries that supply or interact with primary industries, the economic impacts of energy savings and energy production also include induced impacts, which represent increased spending of workers who earn income as a result of the proposed project.

These economic impacts are characterized by WARM using three commonly used output metrics: employment, wage, and tax output. Each output metric is described below in further detail:

- **Employment** represents the jobs supported by materials management of each ton of a material, based on the output per worker and output for each industry. For the purposes of this analysis, employment is characterized in terms of labor hours, as described in Section 8.4.1 below.
- **Labor income (wages)** includes all forms of employment income, including Employee Compensation (wages and benefits) and Proprietor Income.
- **Tax impact** is the breakdown of taxes collected by the federal, state and local government, including corporate taxes, household income taxes, and other business taxes.

A number of underlying assumptions were made as the basis for incorporating economic factors into WARM. These assumptions apply to both the factors that capture the economic activity of waste management activity as well as related energy savings and generation.

- EPA relied on two conventions that are common in economic analysis: that (1) economic impacts of waste management practices are consistent across the country and (2) historic impacts will hold true in the present.
- While employment factors are typically presented in terms of number of jobs (full-time employment), EPA determined that the scale of employment impacts of one ton of waste are more meaningfully represented in terms of labor hours. To convert the employment factors for jobs from the underlying data sources to labor hours, EPA assumed that one job is equivalent to one annual, full-time employment and therefore equal to 2,080 labor hours.<sup>37</sup>

## 8.4 DETAILED METHODOLOGY FOR CALCULATING ECONOMIC FACTORS

This section describes the detailed methodology EPA used to calculate the economic factors associated with waste diversion (recycling, composting and anaerobic digestion), waste disposal (landfilling and combustion), energy reduction, and energy generation.

### 8.4.1 Economic Factors for Waste Diversion

#### 8.4.1.1 Sources for Calculating Factors for Waste Diversion

All activity associated with recycling, composting, and anaerobic digestion were considered collectively as “waste diversion” for the purposes of developing the economic factors for relevant materials in WARM. The primary source for determining economic factors for waste diversion was the U.S. REI study published in 2001 (R.W. Beck 2001) and updated in 2016 (U.S. EPA 2016) and in 2020 (U.S.

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<sup>37</sup> Congressional Research Service. 2021. Federal Workforce Statistics Sources: OPM and OMB. Retrieved from: <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/misc/R43590.pdf>.



EPA 2020). The REI study focused on estimating the economic impacts of waste diversion activities associated with nine waste stream categories, including a range of materials that are diverted and used to make new products. The nine material categories include: ferrous metals, aluminum, glass, plastics, rubber, construction and demolition (C&D) material, electronics, food and organics (donated food), and food and organics (recyclable organics). In the REI study, recycling is defined as “the recovery of discarded materials from the waste stream (e.g., municipal solid waste [MSW]) and the processing of that material into new products,” resulting in the displacement of “the use (and demand) of virgin materials ” (U.S. EPA 2020).

Based on this definition of “recycling,” the REI study includes materials management practices that are captured in WARM (e.g., composting of food waste) as well as management practices not explicitly modeled in WARM (e.g., recovery and refurbishment of end-of-life products and materials, food donation). The REI study includes an analysis of economic impacts for the weighted average mix of organics management practices as well as economic impact data for a range of detailed organics diversion practices, including animal waste processing, animal feed, biodiesel, biogas, compost, mulch and wood chips, and community food services.

EPA assumed that the composting and biogas generation practices for organics correspond to the composting and anaerobic digestion material management processes, respectively, for organics in WARM. However, the economic impact factors for biogas generation calculated from data in the REI study were approximately three orders of magnitude lower than the economic impacts for all other organic diversion processes assessed in the study. Because the economic data mapped to anaerobic digestion is only available at an aggregated industry level, EPA assumed that the biogas factors were an outlier and applied the weighted average organics economic impact factors for anaerobic digestion. The REI study relied on recycling process data about quantity and price, major consumers and processes consuming recyclable material, and recyclable material proportion to allocate economic data in the waste input-output (WIO) framework. These data were obtained from publicly-available databases including the Census Bureau Statistics of U.S. Businesses (SUSB), the U.S. Agricultural Census, and the U.S. Census of Governments. The recycling process of anaerobic digestion was mapped to the six-digit NAICS code for “Other electric power generation, transmission, and distribution”. The activity in this industry is extremely variable and includes solar, wind, and tidal electric power generation.

The REI economic impact metrics include direct and indirect economic activity associated with recycling, composting and anaerobic digestion. Direct recycling activities are those associated with the actual transformation of recyclable materials into marketable products such as the transformation of aluminum scrap into semi-fabricated products (e.g., ingots) in a secondary smelter. Indirect recycling activities include upstream supply chain economics, such as employees who work in material recovery facilities that separate steel scrap, employees who work for suppliers of steel recycling facilities (e.g., electric utilities), and employees of other suppliers through the upstream supply chain. Indirect activities associated with recycling, composting, and anaerobic digestion, include the activities involved in the value chain of the direct processes such as the collection, sorting, and transportation of aluminum scrap to the smelter and the transportation of finished compost to a farm for land application. Under the REI methodology, both impacts relating to the industries that supply or interact with primary industries, as well as impacts that result from increased spending by workers who earn money in waste disposal and management industries (typically referred to as induced impacts) are not included. Impacts focus only on the primary industries that engage with waste collection, hauling, and processing. Because many goods go on to create economic value after being recycling, composted, or anaerobically digested, there are life-cycle benefits of these activities. However, these benefits are not included in the REI economic impacts resulting in REI undervaluing the total economic impact of these activities. For example, the REI

economic metrics for steel does not include the value of the recycled steel being used as an input for new products.

The 2001 REI study (R.W. Beck 2001), the 2016 update (U.S. EPA 2016a), and the 2020 update (U.S. EPA 2020) served as a foundation for the analytical approach used to derive the economic factors, and as such EPA was required to make assumptions to align the studies to WARM. Because there is not a direct match between the materials addressed by the REI study and WARM, EPA had to make assumptions on the relationships between material categories to map REI factors to WARM materials. Materials not modeled explicitly in the REI study include copper wire, fly ash, and PLA. Based on material descriptions in WARM, EPA mapped these materials to the most appropriate categories. There were no appropriate REI categories for carpet, so factors for carpet waste were instead developed using data from the Carpet America Recovery Effort Annual Report (CARE 2017). This imputed metric was then compared to a carpet diversion jobs metric drawn from the Tellus report, “More Jobs, Less Pollution” (Tellus Institute 2011), which augments previous research captured in the 2001 REI study to address a more diverse set of materials and waste management practices. EPA assumed that factors in the 2020 REI study and the 2011 Tellus report are comparable because the Tellus report is based largely on the methodology of the 2001 REI study.

Exhibit 8-1 shows the alignment of the WARM materials with the corresponding REI materials categories and subcategories with the exception of carpet, as discussed above. For three WARM materials - mixed plastics, mixed recyclables, and mixed metals – the composition is made up of a weighted mix of REI material categories, as shown in the “REI Material Category” column.

**Exhibit 8-1: WARM Materials and Corresponding REI Categories and Subcategories**

WARM Material	REI Material Category	REI Material Subcategories
Aluminum Cans	Nonferrous Metals	Aluminum, copper, lead, nickel, tin, titanium, zinc
Aluminum Ingot		
Copper Wire		
Steel Cans	Ferrous Metals	Iron, steel
Structural Steel		
Mixed Metals	Calculated based on weighting of Aluminum and Ferrous Metals categories based on default weightings for Mixed Metals in WARM	N/A
Glass	Glass	No subcategory
HDPE	Plastics	PET, HDPE, PP
PET		
PP		
Mixed Plastics		
Corrugated Containers		
Magazines/Third-class Mail	Paper	Paper and newsprint, paperboard
Newspaper		
Office Paper		
Phonebooks		
Textbooks		
Mixed Paper – (general)		
Mixed Paper – (primarily residential)		
Mixed Paper – (primarily from offices)	Organics	Animal by-products, crop residue, dairy by-products, deceased animal stock, grease/fats, oil, grease, plate waste, produce, oilseed, and grain residues, spoiled food, trim and other cooking waste, yard trimmings
Food Waste		
Food Waste (non-meat)		
Food Waste (meat-only)		
Beef		
Poultry		
Grains		

WARM Material	REI Material Category	REI Material Subcategories
Bread		
Fruits and Vegetables		
Dairy Products		
Mixed Organics		
Yard Trimmings		
Grass		
Leaves		
Branches		
PLA		
Tires		
Dimensional Lumber	Construction & Demolition (C&D) Materials	Concrete, asphalt pavement, asphalt shingles, gypsum wallboard, wood
Concrete		
Asphalt Concrete		
Asphalt Shingles		
Drywall		
Fly Ash		
Wood Flooring		
Desktop CPUs	Electronics	Computers, computer displays, hardcopy devices, keyboards & mice, televisions, mobile devices
Portable Electronic Devices		
Flat-panel Displays		
CRT Displays		
Electronic Peripherals		
Hard-copy Devices		
Mixed Electronics	Calculated based on weighting of Aluminum, Ferrous Metals, Glass, Plastics, Paper, and C&D Materials categories based on default weightings for Mixed Recyclables in WARM	N/A
Mixed Recyclables		

Source: U.S. EPA 2020

**8.4.1.2 Method for Calculating Economic Factors for Waste Diversion**

Economic factors for employment, wage, and taxes were calculated based on the 2020 REI study and the employment factor for carpet were derived from the CARE 2017 report.

The 2020 REI study was the main source for the economic factors incorporated into WARM because the study quantifies the economic impact associated with waste diversion activities in terms of traditional economic metrics (jobs, wages, and industry activity). Using a waste input-output model, the 2020 REI study captures the flow of goods and flow of waste, allowing clearer definitions of a material’s lifecycle boundaries. Furthermore, the 2020 REI study specifically addresses the need to capture not only the recycling process but also the related impacts that occur during the material transformation or remanufacturing processes. These broader life-cycle benefits align more closely with the life-cycle and GHG emissions impacts captured in WARM and thus is it critical that any economic impact approach proposed for use in WARM accounts for them as well.

The factors from the “Total (Direct and Indirect) Impacts” (D&I) approach in the 2020 REI study were used in developing the employment factors in WARM. The D&I approach uses a waste input-output model to measure the multiplier effect, or “ripple effect” of final demand on direct recycling activity and the upstream supply chain. Official U.S. input-output tables are maintained by the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA). However, in order to use this approach, REI developed a specific waste input-output model (WIO) that distinguished flows and outputs of wastes and recycling from ordinary activities. In order to develop waste and recycling specific process allocation assumptions for the new

model, REI compiled data on recycled material quantity and price, major consumers of and processes consuming recycled material, and recyclable proportion for each of the nine material categories. Background data from the U.S Internal Revenue Service (IRS), U.S. Census of Governments and U.S. Economic Census was then used to attribute proportions of personal and corporate tax revenues to different sectors of the economy and tie the new model more closely with the national IO framework.

Using the new WIO model, REI developed material factors for total employment, wages, and taxes. The economic factor for employment is presented in the REI study as the number of jobs per metric ton (and converted to labor hours for use in WARM), while wage and tax factors are presented as thousand dollars per thousand metric tons. Because the WARM model uses short tons, EPA converted these factors to represent the impact per short ton.

As previously described, the REI study does not include economic factors for carpet, and the corresponding Tellus material category for textiles does not offer wage or tax factors. Therefore, EPA estimated a jobs per ton factor for carpet using annual tonnage and employment data from the Carpet America Recovery Effort Annual Report (CARE 2017). In order to confirm the reasonableness of this estimate, the imputed jobs per ton factor was compared to the Tellus jobs per ton metric for textiles. In order to develop wage and tax metrics for carpet, EPA assumed that the relationship between the economic factors for carpet recycling were most similar to the REI metrics for plastics. According to respondents from an annual survey conducted by Carpet America Recovery Effort (CARE 2017), approximately 80 percent of recycled post-consumer carpet is manufactured into engineered resins. These resins are plastic materials that are likely have better mechanical and or thermal properties than commodity plastics and can be used in a multitude of industries.

#### **8.4.2 Economic Factors for Waste Disposal**

Employment impacts, and subsequently wage and tax impacts, related to landfilling and combustion are generally smaller than the impacts related to waste diversion, so different economic factors must be generated to accurately capture waste disposal economic impacts. To calculate employment factors for landfilling and combusting waste (collectively referred to here as waste disposal), EPA used the 2011 Tellus Institute study, "More Jobs, Less Pollution: Growing the Recycling Economy in the U.S." This study incorporates material job factors for collection, reuse, and re-manufacturing from the 2001 REI study in addition to adding baseline job factors for disposed waste. The Tellus study uses ISLR estimates and CM Consulting data to develop material factor estimates for landfilling and combustion.

Tellus did not include factors for wages and taxes associated with landfilling and combustion, thus EPA calculated these factors using the IMPLAN model.<sup>38</sup> EPA created a sample run of the waste and remediation sector in a national IMPLAN model and was thus able to determine the impact on wages and taxes associated with each job. Using that wage and tax impact factor per employee and the Tellus jobs per ton factor for disposed waste, EPA determined that a total of \$43 in wages and \$16 in taxes are generated from one ton of waste disposal (landfilling and combustion). In order to confirm the accuracy of these factors, EPA calculated the wages and taxes generated per employee using the REI diverted waste factors, and applied the average of each to the Tellus disposed waste employment factor to determine wage and tax per ton of waste disposed factors. These calculated factors were of similar magnitude to the factors determined by IMPLAN.

Employment factor estimates do not vary by material type mainly because landfilling and combustion processes are similar across the material subcategories included in the analysis. The

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<sup>38</sup> IMPLAN is a static input-output economic model, described further in Section 8.4.4.2.

employment impacts for waste disposal are smaller than those calculated for waste diversion (recycling, composting, and anaerobic digestion) as waste disposal activities are not as labor intensive. The Tellus study suggests that this finding is explained by the fact that waste disposal relies on large capital-intensive equipment to handle large waste tonnages with few employees. This explanation also applies to materials collection, where large trucks are equipped to handle large tonnage volumes with fewer employees.

The Tellus study provided employment factors for waste disposal collection, landfilling, and combustion. For all material types, 0.56 collection jobs and 0.1 landfilling or combustion jobs are supported for every thousand tons disposed. Because collection occurs for both landfilling and combustion, final employment factors for each management practice were calculated as the sum of the landfill/combustion factor and the collection factor (0.66 jobs per thousand tons). These factors were the same across all material types. Factors are presented in labor hours per metric ton, \$1,000 wages per metric ton, and \$1,000 taxes per metric ton. Because the WARM model uses short tons, EPA converted these factors to represent the impact per short ton.

#### **8.4.3 Economic Impacts of End User Energy Savings**

EPA determined that energy savings typically derived from the use of recycled materials to produce/manufacture products rather than from virgin materials or from the use of a mix of virgin materials. Thus, EPA focused the modeling of the economic impacts of energy savings to end users based on recycled materials.

For each material type, EPA considered three manufacturing mixes to determine energy savings: product manufacturing using 100% virgin material, product manufacturing using 100% recycled material, and product manufacturing using the current mix. EPA then compared the energy consumption of 100% virgin material manufacturing to the energy consumption using 100% recycled materials, and the energy consumption of manufacturing using the current mix of inputs to 100% recycled materials to calculate energy savings.

#### **8.4.4 Energy Savings by Native Fuels**

EPA first determined the energy consumption for recycled/mixed input and virgin production by fuel type for each material, referred to as native fuels.<sup>39</sup> Internal WARM documentation was used to determine the manufacturing energy use by native fuel type for each material. For each material type, total fuel consumption by fuel type in millions of British Thermal Units (MMBtu) was calculated using the native fuel mixes for the energy consumption for manufacturing with 100% virgin material and 100% recycled material. Because the native fuels mix was not available for the current mix, EPA used an average of the virgin and recycled current mixes by fuel type, based on the percentage of virgin and recycled inputs in the current mix. EPA then subtracted fuel consumption with 100% recycled inputs from fuel consumption with the current mix and from 100% virgin to determine the two energy savings values by fuel type for each material type.

##### **8.4.4.1 Regional Fuel Savings**

Because fuel costs can vary across the United States, EPA used regional fuel prices. Regions include: New England, Middle Atlantic, East North Central, West North Central, South Atlantic, East South Central, West South Central, Mountain, and Pacific. EIA's Annual Energy Outlook 2021 (EIA 2021a) report was used for regional fuel prices for the following fuel types: propane, distillate oil, residual oil,

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<sup>39</sup> Native fuels refer to the specific fuel type, such as diesel, propane, gasoline, etc., that is used in a manufacturing process.

natural gas, coal, electricity, gasoline, and nuclear (uranium). The EIA report includes the average energy prices paid in different sectors, such as residential, commercial, industrial, transportation, and electric power. Because energy savings primarily impact manufacturers, EPA used the average annual energy prices for the industrial sector for all fuels that have an average price available in that sector. Because the EIA report does not include fuel prices for diesel and biomass/wood/hydropower, EPA used the annual diesel fuel price for 2020 from EIA's 2020 Weekly Retail Gasoline and Diesel Prices (EIA 2021c). For biomass/wood/hydropower, EPA used data from EIA's December 2020 Monthly Densified Biomass Fuel Report (EIA Dec 2020) and the U.S. Office of Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy 2021 Hydropower Market Report (U.S. Office of Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy 2021) and used a weighted average of hydropower and densified biomass fuel in each region based on EIA's Net Electricity Generation by Type of Producer (EIA 2021b) for 2019. To value energy savings, EPA multiplied energy prices by net savings for each fuel type and summed across all fuels to calculate total savings for each region.

#### **8.4.4.2 Modeling Economic Impact**

To determine which industries had energy savings from using recycled materials as inputs in manufacturing, EPA researched the major consumers of recycled materials for each material type, using REI's "Allocation of Sector Economic Impacts" waste IO model NAICS codes mapping as a primary source (U.S. EPA 2020).

To model the economic impact of energy savings, EPA used the IMPLAN model. The IMPLAN data set is constructed of data from the U.S. National Income and Product Accounts (NIPA) and the Bureau of Economic Analysis, among a variety of other data sources. The model includes 546 industry sectors based on the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). The model uses region-specific multipliers to trace and calculate the flow of dollars from the industries that originate the impact to supplier industries.

Using NAICS codes, EPA mapped impacted industries to IMPLAN sectors. For all material types, at least two IMPLAN sectors experience energy savings. To apportion the value of energy savings between industries, EPA utilized IMPLAN's commodity balance sheets. Commodity balance sheets provide a detailed breakdown of all the industries/IMPLAN sectors that demand or use a selected commodity in their production, and therefore allowed EPA to determine for each material the regional demand of the major consuming industries and apportion energy savings accordingly.

Additionally, EPA used the allocation values from REI's "Allocation of Sector Economic Impacts," which estimates the recycled portion of the commodity used in each industry (U.S. EPA 2020). Multiplying the regional input values from IMPLAN's commodity balance sheets by the allocation of the inputs that are recycled materials allows EPA to determine for each material the regional demand of the major consuming industries more accurately and apportion energy savings accordingly.

When considering production cost savings, such as energy savings, industries may reinvest some of the savings into increasing production. An individual industry and a firm within an industry may use a different percentage of savings to reinvest based on a number of industry-specific factors. Since this information was not available, EPA modeled the impact of 25 percent, 50 percent, and 75 percent of savings being used to increase output and thus increase industry sales. The results of 50 percent saving reinvestment scenario were selected to develop the next version of WARM factors while the results of 25 percent and 75 percent scenarios were used as a sensitivity analysis to understand the range of potential impacts. Under the 25 percent reinvestment scenario, the impacts would be 25 percent lower, and under 75 percent reinvestment impacts would be 25 percent higher. The 50 percent reinvestment modeling results were selected because it showed the median of the potential impacts.

**8.4.5 Economic Impacts from Energy Production**

Energy is produced through the process of anaerobic digestion. EPA modeled the impacts by quantifying the electricity that is generated and used on-site at the anaerobic digestion facility, and excess electricity that is exported to the grid.

**8.4.5.1 Electricity Generation by Anaerobic Digestion Type**

There are two different types of anaerobic digesters, wet and dry digesters. WARM assumes that the wet digester is only used for food waste, and dry digester is used for food waste, branches, grass, leaves, mixed yard trimmings, and mixed organics. The digestate, after being removed from the digester, can either be cured before application to land as a fertilizer, or can be directly applied to agricultural lands. The WARM internal documentation developed by EPA includes factors of kilowatt hours (kWh) of electricity generated and net electricity exported to the grid per milligram (Mg) of waste anaerobically digested for the four anaerobic digestion scenarios:

1. Wet digestion, cured and then applied to land (Wet – Cured)
2. Wet digestion, directly applied to land (Wet – Direct Apply)
3. Dry digestion, cured and then applied to land (Dry – Cured)
4. Dry digestion, directly applied to land (Dry – Directly Apply)

By subtracting the net electricity exported to the grid from the total electricity generation, EPA was able to determine the amount of electricity that is used on-site. Therefore, EPA developed the factors for electricity used on-site and electricity exported to the grid for the materials and anaerobic digestion types included in Exhibit 8-2.

**Exhibit 8-2: WARM Materials and Applicable Anaerobic Digestion Types**

Material	Anaerobic Digestion Type
Food waste	Wet - Direct Applied
	Wet – Cured
	Dry - Direct Applied
	Dry – Cured
Branches	Dry - Direct Applied
	Dry – Cured
Grass	Dry - Direct Applied
	Dry – Cured
Leaves	Dry - Direct Applied
	Dry – Cured
Mixed yard trimmings	Dry - Direct Applied
	Dry – Cured
Mixed organics	Dry - Direct Applied
	Dry – Cured

**8.4.5.2 Valuing Regional Electricity Generation**

EPA monetized the electricity produced through anaerobic digestion using the EIA’s Annual Energy Outlook 2021 report regional industrial prices of electricity (EIA 2021a). Using the IMPLAN model, EPA modeled the energy used on-site as savings to the anaerobic digestion facility and energy sold to the grid as income to the anaerobic digestion facility using the same methodology as described in Section 8.4.3, assuming that 25 percent, 50 percent, and 75 percent of savings will be used to increase output.

EPA assumed that there are three primary industries involved in anaerobic digestion: stand-alone digesters, on-farm co-digesters, and co-digestion systems at water resource recovery facilities. Using the findings of EPA’s Anaerobic Digestion Facilities Process Food Waste in the United States (EPA

2016b) survey results, EPA proportioned the value of the savings between industries based on their relative capacities for processing food waste in 2018.

## 8.5 RESULTS

The national average results of this analysis are shown in Exhibit 8-3, Exhibit 8-4, Exhibit 8-5, Exhibit 8-6, and Exhibit 8-7 for each of the waste management practices in WARM. The factors reflect consolidated impacts from both waste management processes and energy savings/generation. Factors for composting, landfilling, and combustion are only associated with waste management activities. For recycling and anaerobic digestion, the results for the economic impacts associated with waste management activities and energy savings/generation are presented separately in Exhibit 8-8, Exhibit 8-9, Exhibit 8-10, and Exhibit 8-11. The energy savings/generation results assume a 50 percent reinvestment of energy saved/generated.

These estimates of economic impacts are expressed for waste management in absolute terms and are not values relative to another waste management option, although they must be used comparatively, as all WARM economic and emissions factors must be. They are expressed in terms of short tons of waste input (i.e., tons of waste prior to processing).

### 8.5.1 Consolidated Results of Economic Impacts

**Exhibit 8-3: Economic Factors for Waste Diversion and Energy Savings from Recycling (2020 dollars) <sup>a</sup>**

Material	Employment (Labor Hours/Short Ton)	Wages (\$1,000/Short Ton)	Tax (\$1,000/Short Ton)
Aluminum Cans	61.60	1.62	0.34
Aluminum Ingot	61.60	1.62	0.34
Copper Wire	61.60	1.62	0.34
Steel Cans	8.21	0.24	0.04
Mixed Metals	26.38	0.70	0.14
Glass	19.33	0.52	0.08
HDPE	48.82	1.11	0.19
PET	48.82	1.11	0.19
PP	48.82	1.11	0.19
Mixed Plastics	47.75	1.07	0.17
Corrugated Containers	6.79	0.22	0.06
Magazines/Third-class Mail	6.79	0.22	0.06
Newspaper	6.79	0.22	0.06
Office Paper	6.79	0.22	0.06
Phonebooks	6.79	0.22	0.06
Textbooks	6.79	0.22	0.06
Mixed Paper – (general)	6.79	0.22	0.06
Mixed Paper – (primarily residential)	6.79	0.22	0.06
Mixed Paper – (primarily from offices)	6.79	0.22	0.06
Tires	23.79	0.57	0.08
Dimensional Lumber <sup>b</sup>	1.03	0.03	<0.01
Concrete	1.03	0.03	<0.01
Asphalt Concrete	1.03	0.03	<0.01
Asphalt Shingles	1.03	0.03	<0.01
Drywall	1.03	0.03	<0.01
Fly Ash	1.03	0.03	<0.01
Wood Flooring <sup>b</sup>	1.03	0.03	<0.01
Carpet	23.18	0.50	0.07
Structural Steel	8.11	0.24	0.04
Desktop CPUs	67.84	2.55	0.58



Portable Electronic Devices	67.84	2.55	0.58
Flat-panel Displays	67.84	2.55	0.58
CRT Displays	67.84	2.55	0.58
Electronic Peripherals	67.84	2.55	0.58
Hard-copy Devices	67.84	2.55	0.58
Mixed Electronics	67.84	2.55	0.58
Mixed Recyclables	7.16	0.20	0.04

<sup>a</sup> Factors reflect economic impacts associated with waste diversion activities and energy savings when using 100% recycled material relative to material produced with the current mix of recycled inputs.

<sup>b</sup> Modeled as Reuse in WARM.

#### Exhibit 8-4: Economic Factors for Composting (2020 dollars)<sup>a, b</sup>

Material Composted	Employment (Labor Hours/Short Ton)	Wages (\$1,000/Short Ton)	Tax (\$1,000/Short Ton)
PLA	0.51	0.01	0.004
Food Waste (non-meat)	0.51	0.01	0.004
Food Waste (meat only)	0.51	0.01	0.004
Beef	0.51	0.01	0.004
Poultry	0.51	0.01	0.004
Grains	0.51	0.01	0.004
Bread	0.51	0.01	0.004
Fruits and Vegetables	0.51	0.01	0.004
Dairy Products	0.51	0.01	0.004
Yard Trimmings	0.51	0.01	0.004
Grass	0.51	0.01	0.004
Leaves	0.51	0.01	0.004
Branches	0.51	0.01	0.004
Food Waste	0.51	0.01	0.004
Mixed Organics	0.51	0.01	0.004

<sup>a</sup> Factors reflect economic impacts associated with waste diversion activities.

<sup>b</sup> EPA acknowledges that composting economic impacts are undervalued in the REI metrics because they do not include life-cycle impacts. See Sections 8.3 and 8.6 for further explanation.

#### Exhibit 8-5: Economic Factors for Waste Diversion and Energy Generation from Anaerobic Digestion (2020 dollars)<sup>a, b</sup>

Material	Type <sup>c</sup>	Employment (Labor Hours/Short Ton)	Wages (\$1,000/Short Ton)	Tax (\$1,000/Short Ton)
Food Waste	All Types	2.33	4.38	2.53
Food Waste (non-meat)	All Types	2.44	8.71	5.06
Food Waste (meat only)	All Types	2.44	8.71	5.06
Beef	All Types	2.44	8.71	5.06
Poultry	All Types	2.44	8.71	5.06
Grains	All Types	2.44	8.71	5.06
Bread	All Types	2.44	8.71	5.06
Fruits and Vegetables	All Types	2.44	8.71	5.06
Dairy Products	All Types	2.44	8.71	5.06
Yard Trimmings	Dry - Direct Applied	2.25	1.19	0.67
	Dry - Cured	2.26	1.58	0.90
Grass	All Types	2.26	1.54	0.87
Leaves	All Types	2.24	1.09	0.62
Branches	All Types	2.27	2.15	1.23

<sup>a</sup> Factors reflect economic impacts associated with waste diversion activities and energy generation.

<sup>b</sup> EPA acknowledges that anaerobic digestion economic impacts are undervalued in the REI metrics because they do not include life-cycle impacts. See Sections 8.3 and 8.6 for further explanation.

<sup>c</sup> All types include Wet-Direct Applied, Wet-Cured, Dry-Direct Applied, and Dry-Cured.

**Exhibit 8-6: Economic Factors for Landfilling (2020 dollars)<sup>a</sup>**

<b>Material Landfilled</b>	<b>Employment (Labor Hours/Short Ton)</b>	<b>Wages (\$1,000/ Short Ton)</b>	<b>Tax (\$1,000/ Short Ton)</b>
All Materials	1.25	0.04	0.02

<sup>a</sup> Factors reflect economic impacts associated with waste disposal activities.

**Exhibit 8-7: Economic Factors for Combustion (2020 dollars)<sup>a</sup>**

<b>Material Combusted</b>	<b>Employment (Labor Hours/Short Ton)</b>	<b>Wages (\$1,000/ Short Ton)</b>	<b>Tax (\$1,000/ Short Ton)</b>
Aluminum Cans	1.25	0.04	0.02
Aluminum Ingot	1.25	0.04	0.02
Steel Cans	1.25	0.04	0.02
Copper Wire	1.25	0.04	0.02
Glass	1.25	0.04	0.02
HDPE	1.25	0.04	0.02
LDPE	1.25	0.04	0.02
PET	1.25	0.04	0.02
LLDPE	1.25	0.04	0.02
PP	1.25	0.04	0.02
PS	1.25	0.04	0.02
PVC	1.25	0.04	0.02
PLA	1.25	0.04	0.02
Corrugated Containers	1.25	0.04	0.02
Magazines/Third-class Mail	1.25	0.04	0.02
Newspaper	1.25	0.04	0.02
Office Paper	1.25	0.04	0.02
Phonebooks	1.25	0.04	0.02
Textbooks	1.25	0.04	0.02
Dimensional Lumber	1.25	0.04	0.02
Medium-density Fiberboard	1.25	0.04	0.02
Food Waste (non-meat)	1.25	0.04	0.02
Food Waste (meat only)	1.25	0.04	0.02
Beef	1.25	0.04	0.02
Poultry	1.25	0.04	0.02
Grains	1.25	0.04	0.02
Bread	1.25	0.04	0.02
Fruits and Vegetables	1.25	0.04	0.02
Dairy Products	1.25	0.04	0.02
Yard Trimmings	1.25	0.04	0.02
Grass	1.25	0.04	0.02
Leaves	1.25	0.04	0.02
Branches	1.25	0.04	0.02
Mixed Paper (general)	1.25	0.04	0.02
Mixed Paper (primarily residential)	1.25	0.04	0.02
Mixed Paper (primarily from offices)	1.25	0.04	0.02
Mixed Metals	1.25	0.04	0.02
Mixed Plastics	1.25	0.04	0.02
Mixed Recyclables	1.25	0.04	0.02
Food Waste	1.25	0.04	0.02
Mixed Organics	1.25	0.04	0.02
Mixed MSW	1.25	0.04	0.02
Carpet	1.25	0.04	0.02
Desktop CPUs	1.25	0.04	0.02
Portable Electronic Devices	1.25	0.04	0.02
Flat-panel Displays	1.25	0.04	0.02
CRT Displays	1.25	0.04	0.02

Material Combusted	Employment (Labor Hours/Short Ton)	Wages (\$1,000/ Short Ton)	Tax (\$1,000/ Short Ton)
Electronic Peripherals	1.25	0.04	0.02
Hard-copy Devices	1.25	0.04	0.02
Mixed Electronics	1.25	0.04	0.02
Tires	1.25	0.04	0.02
Asphalt Shingles	1.25	0.04	0.02
Vinyl Flooring	1.25	0.04	0.02
Wood Flooring	1.25	0.04	0.02

<sup>a</sup> Factors reflect economic impacts associated with waste disposal activities.

### 8.5.2 Economic Impacts Associated with Waste Management Activities

Exhibit 8-8 and Exhibit 8-9 below detail the economic impacts associated with waste diversion processes for recycling and anaerobic digestion, respectively. These results are consolidated with the economic impacts from energy savings to develop the economic factors for recycling and anaerobic digestion presented in WARM (see Exhibit 8-3 and Exhibit 8-5). The results below may be used to analyze the economic impacts that are felt specifically in the waste management industries.

#### Exhibit 8-8: Economic Factors from Waste Diversion for Recycling (2020 dollars)

Material Recycled	Employment (Labor Hours/Short Ton)	Wages (\$1,000/ Short Ton)	Tax (\$1,000/ Short Ton)
Aluminum Cans	53.76	1.35	0.24
Aluminum Ingot	53.76	1.35	0.24
Copper Wire	53.76	1.35	0.24
Steel Cans	7.76	0.22	0.04
Mixed Metals	23.90	0.62	0.11
Glass	19.21	0.51	0.08
HDPE	44.27	0.95	0.13
PET	44.27	0.95	0.13
PP	44.27	0.95	0.13
Mixed Plastics	44.27	0.95	0.13
Corrugated Containers	3.19	0.09	0.01
Magazines/Third-class Mail	3.19	0.09	0.01
Newspaper	3.19	0.09	0.01
Office Paper	3.19	0.09	0.01
Phonebooks	3.19	0.09	0.01
Textbooks	3.19	0.09	0.01
Mixed Paper (general)	3.19	0.09	0.01
Mixed Paper (primarily residential)	3.19	0.09	0.01
Mixed Paper (primarily from offices)	3.19	0.09	0.01
Tires	22.38	0.53	0.07
Dimensional Lumber <sup>a</sup>	0.89	0.02	<0.01
Concrete	0.89	0.02	<0.01
Asphalt Concrete	0.89	0.02	<0.01
Asphalt Shingles	0.89	0.02	<0.01
Drywall	0.89	0.02	<0.01
Fly Ash	0.89	0.02	<0.01
Wood Flooring <sup>a</sup>	0.89	0.02	<0.01
Carpet	23.04	0.49	0.07
Structural Steel	7.76	0.22	0.04
Desktop CPUs	62.27	2.29	0.50
Portable Electronic Devices	62.27	2.29	0.50
Flat-panel Displays	62.27	2.29	0.50
CRT Displays	62.27	2.29	0.50

Material Recycled	Employment (Labor Hours/Short Ton)	Wages (\$1,000/ Short Ton)	Tax (\$1,000/ Short Ton)
Electronic Peripherals	62.27	2.29	0.50
Hard-copy Devices	62.27	2.29	0.50
Mixed Electronics	62.27	2.29	0.50
Mixed Recyclables	6.06	0.16	0.02

<sup>a</sup> Modeled as Reuse in WARM.

#### Exhibit 8-9: Economic Factors from Waste Diversion for Anaerobic Digestion (2020 dollars) <sup>a</sup>

Material Anaerobically Digested	Employment (Labor Hours/Short Ton)	Wages (\$1,000/Short Ton)	Tax (\$1,000/Short Ton)
Food Waste (non-meat)	2.22	0.06	0.01
Food Waste (meat only)	2.22	0.06	0.01
Beef	2.22	0.06	0.01
Poultry	2.22	0.06	0.01
Grains	2.22	0.06	0.01
Bread	2.22	0.06	0.01
Fruits and Vegetables	2.22	0.06	0.01
Dairy Products	2.22	0.06	0.01
Yard Trimmings	2.22	0.06	0.01
Grass	2.22	0.06	0.01
Leaves	2.22	0.06	0.01
Branches	2.22	0.06	0.01
Food Waste	2.22	0.06	0.01
Mixed Organics	2.22	0.06	0.01

<sup>a</sup> EPA acknowledges that anaerobic digestion economic impacts are undervalued in the REI metrics because they do not include life-cycle impacts. See Sections 8.3 and 8.6 for further explanation.

### 8.5.3 Results of Economic Impacts Associated with Energy Savings and Energy Generation

Exhibit 8-10, and Exhibit 8-11 below detail the economic impacts associated with energy savings from recycling and energy generation from anaerobic digestion, respectively. These results are consolidated with the economic impacts from waste diversion activities to develop the economic factors for recycling and anaerobic digestion presented in WARM (see Exhibit 8-3 and Exhibit 8-5). The results below may be used to analyze the economic impacts that are specifically attributable to the energy savings from remanufacturing with recycled material and energy generated through anaerobic digestion.

#### Exhibit 8-10: Economic Factors for Energy Savings from Recycling (2020 dollars)

WARM Material	Mixed vs 100% Recycled			100% Virgin vs 100% Recycled		
	Employment (Labor Hours/Short Ton)	Wages (\$1,000/ Short Ton)	Tax (\$1,000/ Short Ton)	Employment (Labor Hours/ Short Ton)	Wages (\$1,000/ Short Ton)	Tax (\$1,000/ Short Ton)
Aluminum Cans	7.84	0.27	0.10	26.71	0.90	0.32
Aluminum Ingot	7.84	0.27	0.10	26.71	0.90	0.32
Copper Wire	7.84	0.27	0.10	26.71	0.90	0.32
Steel Cans	0.45	0.02	0.01	0.32	0.01	<0.01
Mixed Metals	2.49	0.09	0.03	5.81	0.20	0.07
Glass	0.12	<0.01	<0.01	0.16	0.01	<0.01
HDPE	4.55	0.16	0.06	4.60	0.16	0.06
PET	4.55	0.16	0.06	4.60	0.16	0.06
PP	4.55	0.16	0.06	4.60	0.16	0.06
Mixed Plastics	3.48	0.12	0.05	3.42	0.12	0.04
Corrugated Containers	3.60	0.13	0.05	4.25	0.15	0.05

Magazines/Third-class Mail	3.60	0.13	0.05	4.25	0.15	0.05
Newspaper	3.60	0.13	0.05	4.25	0.15	0.05
Office Paper	3.60	0.13	0.05	4.25	0.15	0.05
Phonebooks	3.60	0.13	0.05	4.25	0.15	0.05
Textbooks	3.60	0.13	0.05	4.25	0.15	0.05
Mixed Paper – Broad	3.60	0.13	0.05	4.25	0.15	0.05
Mixed Paper – Residential	3.60	0.13	0.05	4.25	0.15	0.05
Mixed Paper – Office	3.60	0.13	0.05	4.25	0.15	0.05
Tires	1.41	0.04	0.02	5.15	0.16	0.06
Dimensional Lumber <sup>a</sup>	0.14	<0.01	<0.01	1.03	0.03	0.01
Concrete	0.14	<0.01	<0.01	1.03	0.03	0.01
Asphalt Concrete	0.14	<0.01	<0.01	1.03	0.03	0.01
Asphalt Shingles	0.14	<0.01	<0.01	1.03	0.03	0.01
Drywall	0.14	<0.01	<0.01	1.03	0.03	0.01
Fly Ash	0.14	<0.01	<0.01	1.03	0.03	0.01
Wood Flooring <sup>a</sup>	0.14	<0.01	<0.01	1.03	0.03	0.01
Carpet	0.14	<0.01	<0.01	1.03	0.03	0.01
Structural Steel	0.36	0.01	<0.01	2.00	0.07	0.03
Desktop CPUs	5.57	0.26	0.09	8.75	0.40	0.14
Portable Electronic Devices	5.57	0.26	0.09	8.75	0.40	0.14
Flat-panel Displays	5.57	0.26	0.09	8.75	0.40	0.14
CRT Displays	5.57	0.26	0.09	8.75	0.40	0.14
Electronic Peripherals	5.57	0.26	0.09	8.75	0.40	0.14
Hard-copy Devices	5.57	0.26	0.09	8.75	0.40	0.14
Mixed Electronics	5.57	0.26	0.09	8.75	0.40	0.14
Mixed Recyclables	1.10	0.04	0.01	5.26	0.18	0.07

<sup>a</sup> Modeled as Reuse in WARM.

#### Exhibit 8-11: Economic Factors for Energy Generation from Anaerobic Digestion (2020 dollars)

Material	Type <sup>a</sup>	Employment	Wages	Tax
		(Labor Hours/Short Ton)	(\$1,000/Short Ton)	(\$1,000/Short Ton)
Food Waste	All types	0.11	4.32	2.52
Food Waste (non-meat)	All types	0.23	8.65	5.05
Food Waste (meat only)	All types	0.23	8.65	5.05
Beef	All types	0.23	8.65	5.05
Poultry	All types	0.23	8.65	5.05
Grains	All types	0.23	8.65	5.05
Bread	All types	0.23	8.65	5.05
Fruits and Vegetables	All types	0.23	8.65	5.05
Dairy Products	All types	0.23	8.65	5.05
Yard Trimmings	Dry - Direct Applied	0.03	1.13	0.66
	Dry - Cured	0.04	1.52	0.89
Grass	All types	0.04	1.48	0.86
Leaves	All types	0.03	1.04	0.60
Branches	All types	0.06	2.09	1.22

<sup>a</sup> All types include Wet-Direct Applied, Wet-Cured, Dry-Direct Applied, and Dry-Cured.

## 8.6 LIMITATIONS

### 8.6.1 Limitations Associated with Analysis of Economic Impacts from Waste Management Processes

The certainty of the analysis associated with waste management activity presented in this chapter is limited by the reliability of the various data elements used. The most significant limitations are as follows:

- The key limitation of using the economic factors produced in the 2020 REI study to develop economic impact factors associated with materials management activity for WARM is that EPA was not able to disaggregate the individual components of economic activity that comprise the factors (e.g., jobs from energy inputs to recycling processes). This means that EPA was unable to update any aspects of the underlying activity that drives the factors or fully document the assumptions that were used by the REI project team to derive each factor.
- The REI study does not cover all material types or management practices that are addressed in WARM, such as carpet, landfilling, and combustion. To fill these gaps, EPA utilized other secondary studies. EPA relied on data from Tellus Institute (2011) to incorporate economic factors for recycling of carpet as well as employment factors for landfilling and combustion. Additionally, the Tellus study is based on the original REI report from 2001, which uses a dated methodology compared to what is used in the 2020 REI report.
- While source reduction is a priority for EPA, the associated economic impacts of source reduction were not analyzed by REI or in any other sources reviewed by EPA; therefore, WARM currently does not quantify the economic impacts from source reduction.
- While the limited definition of economic impacts used in the 2020 REI study limits the total economic impacts captured in the factors. The 2020 REI D&I approach was chosen to assess the impact of materials management activity because it most closely resembles a traditional economic impact analysis. However, the approach that the study uses to characterizes direct and indirect impacts differs from the way EPA would optimally capture total economic impact. In the REI approach, direct impact is characterized as only the activity associated with the actual transformation of recyclable materials into marketable products, while the indirect activity includes upstream supply chain economic activity that supports recycling processes. Economic impacts determined by modeling programs, such as IMPLAN, capture three levels of impacts: direct, indirect, and induced. Typically, direct impacts are impacts in the primary industries that engage with transformation or remanufacturing, waste collection, hauling, and processing. This is encompassing of what is included as direct and indirect impacts in the REI D&I approach. Indirect impacts, as defined by IMPLAN, are impacts in the industries that supply or interact with the primary industries, and induced activity represents the increased spending of workers who earn money due to the increased economic activity. Therefore, the limited definition of economic impacts used in the REI study limits the total economic impacts captured in the factors.
- The waste disposal factors from the Tellus Institute (2011) assume a constant value for both waste disposal processes, combustion and landfilling, across all material types. Tellus determined these factors based on tonnage and employment data from surveys of various recycling and reuse businesses completed by the ILSR in the 1990s. Because EPA did not develop these calculations, the exact process Tellus used to arrive at these factors is uncertain. Additionally, the age of the data used in the Tellus report raises concerns about potential inaccuracy of the data and its relevance today. This also raises some concerns about making comparisons between the economic factors for waste diversion and disposal practices.
- Few studies have attempted to determine the economic impacts of waste management practices to the extent presented here. Thus, EPA had to primarily rely on a single source, the 2020 REI study, for metrics and had limited validation opportunities. Many other state and regional studies explored the impacts of recycling in terms of total employment or total industry activity, but few went as far as to determine factors for specific materials. EPA reviewed many

such studies, as listed below, to determine potential analytical approaches and to evaluate the calculated factors. Exhibit 8-12 lists several of these sources.

**Exhibit 8-12: State and Regional Studies**

Study Region	Study Year	Study Name
Delaware	2007	A Scenario for Resource Management in the State of Delaware
Iowa	2007	Economic Impacts of Recycling in Iowa
Connecticut	2012	The Economic Impact on Connecticut from Recycling Activity
Pennsylvania	2013	The Economic Impacts of the Municipal Waste Collection, Transportation, Recycling, and Disposal Industry in Pennsylvania
Texas	2015	Study on the Economic Impacts of Recycling
Indiana	2013	The Untapped Job Potential of Indiana's Recycling Industry
Multi-Region	2018	The Economics of Recycling: Reports from States and Others
National	1989	Salvaging the Future: Waste Based Production
National	1995	Manufacturing from Recyclables: 24 Case Studies of Successful Enterprises

**8.6.2 Limitations Associated with Analysis of Economic Impacts from Energy Savings and Generation**

Because EPA's analysis is specific to energy savings for the end user of the recycled product, EPA is only able to monetize economic impacts of end user energy savings for recycling, and not for other materials management practices. If a material is landfilled, combusted, or not used at all (source reduction) then it cannot be used as an input to production once that process is complete.

EPA does estimate the economic impacts from energy production for anaerobic digestion. A note for future consideration and improvement is the possibility of estimating economic impacts from other energy production processes such as landfill gas to energy or waste to energy.

EPA recognizes that fertilizer offsets are another potential impact of anaerobic digestion. However, because the amount of fertilizer produced per Mg of waste anaerobically digested is relatively minor (max 3.9 kg), the price of fertilizer is already low (approximately \$0.40 per pound),<sup>40</sup> and it is difficult to determine the price differential between conventional fertilizer and fertilizer produced through anaerobic digestion, EPA chose to focus the analysis of the economic impact of anaerobic digestion on only the impact of electricity generation.

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