

**California Integrated Waste Management Board (CIWMB) announced the state has reached an unprecedented 58 percent waste diversion rate**

Source: CIWMB News Release Dec 29, 2008.

This week, California Integrated Waste Management Board (CIWMB) announced the state has reached an unprecedented 58 percent waste diversion rate - diverting 54 million tons of trash for reuse and recycling.

California produces about 93 million tons of solid waste per year, which fills up limited landfill space and emits methane gas. Fifty-four million tons of diverted waste is equivalent to filling more than 100 football fields to a height equal to the Empire State Building.

By finding higher and better uses for daily discarded materials, California claims to have created a mainstream industry that accounts for 85,000 jobs, generates \$4 billion in salaries and wages, and produces \$10 billion worth of goods and services annually. The environmental impacts of recycling saves enough energy to power 1.4 million California homes, and reduces water pollution by 27,047 tons.

Recycling also saves 14 million trees and helps to reduce air pollution by 165,142 tons. All of these efforts are working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by an amount equal to taking 3.8 million passenger cars off the highway.

The official 58 percent statewide diversion rate surpasses a legislatively imposed mandate of 50 percent waste diversion and places the state at the forefront of national efforts to reduce and recycle our trash.

The Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989 required individual California cities and counties to cut their disposal rates in half, but left the specifics for doing so largely up to each jurisdiction, in light of their individual needs and available resources.

The challenge for Californians near term will be what to do with their recyclables which are now stockpiling due to lack of demand for recycled commodities.