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Ocean City, Md. Trashes Its Recycling Program

Daniel Guzman ■ 1 day ago

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OCEAN CITY, Md. (CBS) -- For three months every summer, Ocean City, Maryland morphs from a sleepy town of 7,000 into the second largest city in the state. That brings alive the ferris wheel and carnival games, and makes the popcorn stands pop.

It also brings a huge increase in trash and a huge problem.

"We are a beach community," says Dick Malone, Ocean City's Public Works Deputy Director. "We have a lot of trash four months of the year. Eight months of the year we don't have much. So for us to recycle is very difficult."

Difficult and expensive. It costs \$1.5 million dollars a year. That's \$394 a ton to recycle. Compare that with \$162 a ton to just throw it all away. "\$162 vs. \$392," Malone says. "In good faith, as manager of this department, I could not ask the citizens of the town of Ocean City to continue this."

Ocean City spent 23 years convincing residents to sort their trash. Last April, it dumped its curbside recycling program, saving a million dollars annually. The trash won't linger in a landfill. It will go to a waste energy plant to be made into electricity.

The move did not make everyone happy. "We did have people who were adamant recyclers," Malone says, "who jumped up and down and really were mad and wanted it to continue and wanted their taxes raised. But they were few and far between."

Cities across the country are facing dire budget choices. Property values have tanked, and so have their general funds, which often pay for police, fire,



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transit, and recycling. Something has to give.

"We know that cities have already cut off the top the best they can," says Christiana McFarland of the National League of Cities. "They're down to measures of last resort for sure looking at their police and fire, public safety as well as turning to other quality as life issues as well."


A few other communities are considering changes to curbside recycling. Also on the Eastern Shore, Kent County, Md. and Princess Anne, Md. have ended their curbside recycling programs.


In your voice


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 TheShepherd wrote:
Therein lies the problem, nobody wants to fork our the extra time and money to be environmentally responsible now. It's not going to cause a problem in our lifetime after all! The problem will be left for future generations to deal with. O.C. and others are taking a calculated risk and we see what happens when people take calculated risks with the environment...like the [BP oil spill](#) in the gulf.
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 buzzardbait wrote:
I do not see where there will be a reduction in manpower after the recycle program ends.The story says no more recycling in O.C. What happens to the people who picked up the stuff? Are they out of a job or are they put somewhere else and still drawing a salary? If there were a lot less chiefs and a lot more indians, you could save a lot more money. That will never happen!!!!
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