CT DEEP SOLID WASTE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TEXTILE RECYCLING
PATHS FOR DIVERTED TEXTILES
The Life Cycle of Secondhand Clothing

What happens to your donated or recycled used clothing?
On average, each American donates or recycles 12 pounds of apparel, footwear, and household textiles. Here’s what happens next...

Once a consumer determines that their clothing, shoes, handbags, or household textiles have reached the end of their useful life, materials are donated to a charity or should be recycled at a municipal recycling center as a final alternative to the landfill.

80%
Left with billions of pounds, charities resell their salvage to recyclers which raises significant revenue and is an alternative to the landfill. Secondhand clothing recyclers sort and separate the materials into three general classifications:

45%
REUSED AND REPURPOSED
Majority exported as secondhand clothing.

30%
RECYCLED AND CONVERTED
Reclaimed wiping rags are used in various ways as industrial and residential absorbents.

20%
RECYCLED INTO FIBER
Post-consumer fiber is used to make home insulation, carpet padding, and raw material for the automotive industry.

Only 5% ends up as waste.

10-20%
Charities sell donated clothing at their thrift locations earning revenue for their organization.

Did you know?
Worn or torn, all dry clothing, shoes, and textiles can be donated or recycled.

Thrift Industry employs nearly 100,000 workers in the U.S. with over $1 billion in wages paid. In addition, private sector recyclers create an additional 15,000 to 20,000 jobs nationally.

Most private sector recyclers are small businesses with fewer than 500 employees. Every 1,000 lbs donated and recycled generates two man days of labor. Primary and secondary recyclers account for annual gross sales in excess of $700 million.

Charities and private sector combined handle 3.3 billion pounds annually. These tremendous volumes are recycled and processed due to a highly efficient industry. Your secondhand clothing goes through this entire process in just 30-60 days.

SOURCES
1 EPA, 2009 FEDERAL MSW waste study. 3.8 billion lbs recovered, divided by 2010 US Census Population 310 million
2 Textile Recycling in the U.S. Report submitted to SMART by Dr. Jani Hawley PhD., Univ. of Missouri, 2009
3 Ibid.
4 EPA, 2009 Federal MSW waste study.
5 CTR estimate.

The textile recycling process follows the conventional recycling maxims of Reduce, Reuse, Recycle!
INDEPTH – PCTW RECYCLING FACILITIES...

- Textile recycling facilities engage in labor intensive sorting, separating, and recycling of apparel, footwear, household textiles and accessories.
Most Efficient facilities can process between 35-50 tons per day of PCTW

= 140,000-200,000 units DAILY

Larger processors may handle more
Post Consumer Textile Waste
Labor Intensive: 1 Ton of PCTW requires 2 days of semi skilled labor

Clothing on main sorting line

Efficient Material Handling
PCTW REUSED & RECYCLED

- **FIBER:**
  - Clothing that is converted into RECYCLED fibers and used in green products: Denim Insulation, Carpet Padding, Automotive Sound Dampening, Recycled Textiles with % of PCTW, Recycled Wool and Synthetic Fibers.

- **WIPER:**
  - RECYCLED clothing cut and converted into wiping rags and used in homes and as industrial absorbents, paint, petrol industry, spill control.

- **USED CLOTHING:**
  - REUSED/ REPURPOSED and Exported to the developing world where 2/3 of the population lives on less than $2 per day. Industry provides affordable clothing to the developing world.
Recycled Fiber

Denim Fiber

Fiber Recycler
Sweatshirts Recycled into RECLAIMED WIPERS
USED CLOTHING

Used Clothing Baled for Export

Loaded into containers bound for the developing world
Clothing sold to market wholesalers in Haiti
PCTW % REUSED & RECYCLED

- Wiping Rags: 30%
- Fiber: 20%
- Used Clothing: 45%
- Waste: 5%
END
CTR’s Mission: Create awareness about keeping what we wear out of landfills in order to divert significant quantities of pctw from global, national, and local landfills.

[Website Link] www.WearDonateRecycle.org
EACH STAKEHOLDER SHARES COMMON GROUND
....WHERE WE CAN COLLECTIVELY IMPACT THE GLOBAL
ISSUE OF PCTW.....

1) Increase awareness through a generic platform of “Donate/Recycle”

2) Foster an environment where member companies can find one another to divert pctw away from our global landfills.

Green – Producers of pctw
Blue – Solution Providers

6/24/2013 Council for Textile Recycling
The average U.S. citizen throws away 70 pounds of clothing every year, all of which ends up in our already crowded landfills.

**Issue**

- **5%**
  - The U.S. EPA estimates that textile waste occupies nearly 5% of all landfill space.
- **85% not recycled**
- **70 lbs.**
  - The average US citizen throws away 64 pounds of clothing and other textiles annually.

**Solution**

- **Since the mid 1940s U.S. charities and the private sector post-consumer textile recycling industry has repurposed and recycled billions of pounds of clothing, household textiles, shoes, and accessories. This ensures we retain the value of our one most renewable resources - your old clothing, footwear, and textiles.**
- **Today more than ever we can all be green and donate and recycle what we buy and wear.**

**WEAR. DONATE. RECYCLE.**

The Council for Textile Recycling is a 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to create awareness about keeping clothing, footwear, and textiles out of landfills.

Read more about CTR's goal:

“ZERO by 2037”
Wear. Donate. Recycle. says it all...
LF USA’s vision includes the CTR’s URL under care instructions that will distinguish their clients as leaders in Reuse and Recycling
The industry’s only vetted search tool.

The average U.S. citizen throws away 70 pounds of clothing every year, all of which ends up in our already crowded landfills.

**Issue**
- **5%** The U.S. EPA estimates that textile waste occupies nearly 5% of all landfill space.
- **85% not recycled** CTR estimates that while our industry recycles some 2.5 billion pounds annually of post-consumer textile waste (PCTW) this only accounts for approx. 20% of all PCT, leaving 80% on our landfills.
- **70 lbs.** The average US citizen throws away 68 pounds of clothing and other textiles annually.

**Solution**
- Since the mid 1940’s U.S. charities and the private sector post-consumer textile recycling industry has repurposed and recycled billions of pounds of clothing, household textiles, shoes, and accessories. This insures we retain the value of our one most renewable resources - your old clothing, footwear, and textiles.
- Today more than ever we can all be green and donate and recycle what we buy and wear.

**WEAR. DONATE. RECYCLE.**

The Council for Textile Recycling is a 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to create awareness about keeping clothing, footwear, and textiles out of landfills.

**Read more about CTR’s goal:**

“ZERO by 2037”
Resources

CTR
Council for Textile Recycling
www.weardonaterecycle.org

SMART – trade association.
Secondhand Materials & Recycled Textiles Association
www.smartasn.org

BIR
Bureau of International Recycling / Textiles Division
www.bir.org

BOOKS:
Pietra Rivoli, The Travels of T-Shirt in the Global Economy,
ISBN# 978-0-470-28716-3

The Council for Textile Recycling is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit, tax exempt organization incorporated in the State of Maryland and filed with the Attorney General. Our TAX ID is 52-1778642. Consult your financial officer for details on the benefits to your company.