
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Municipal solid waste is an often-ignored source of greenhouse gas emissions, air and water pollution, habitat destruction and degradation, and public health risk. As human population and consumption continue to grow, the burden of waste grows too. Here in the United States, we have just 5% of the global population but create 30% of all waste. Our outsized consumption makes identifying effective ways of improving waste-reduction and waste-management practices extremely important.

Understanding the general public's motivations and actions toward waste-reduction practices and policy can help waste-management professionals identify which language and images to use in education campaigns. Considering the public's perception and comprehension of related policy can also help waste-management professionals determine where further engagement and additional research is needed.

Recognizing the need for additional information to address critical waste-reduction messaging strategies and existing policies, the Center for Biological Diversity conducted research in 2021 via a combination of nationwide and targeted online surveys to learn more about perceptions of effective language for the prevention of waste, policies that help prevent the creation of waste in the first place, and motivations surrounding the support of these topics. The survey was distributed to the public in the United States through an online marketplace that compensates people for participating in surveys called MTurk. The results from the survey of the general public are referred to as "the public" or "MTurk." The survey was also distributed to employees, partners, and members of the Center for Biological Diversity. This survey was unpaid and is referred to as the "national convenience sample."

