

Trans 204- My Opinions on the Discussion Panel Conserving Our Energy Resources

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When the topic of recycling comes up, I generally think about reducing landfill space and saving resources, but not the energy saved. One quote mentioned that recycling one ton of aluminum cans saves energy equivalent to 2,350 gallons of gasoline. I suppose that figure could be legitimate when factoring in transportation and production of aluminum cans, but we are also talking about equivalent energy saved rather than the resources saved. Wind and water power would change the perspective, but it is quite a bit of energy saved.

Another set of figures caught my eye when comparing two groups. It costs \$95 per ton to recycle. It costs \$85 to dispose of waste in a landfill. Environmentalists say that landfill tipping fees collect only \$3 per ton for a consumer to dump one ton of waste, and that money would go to recycling. That would mean that taxes would cover \$85 to dispose of waste in a landfill and \$92 to recycle the same waste. Common sense tells me that if these figures are true, tipping fees should be at least \$10 to match landfill costs.

The programs set out by companies to make products recyclable are great, and I would encourage them to do so, but packaging I believe would be tough to get a company to change. Many products are sealed permanently in hard plastic, requiring the use of a scissors or knife to get at the product. Companies know that this reduces theft and discourages returned products, so finding products that are easily returned are difficult. On top of that, products are just not being made repairable. The products are getting too advanced and too compact to be able to take an appliance to a mechanic. The demand of the future I believe is part of the problem with recycling.