

Textile Reuse and Recycling

A SMART Perspective



The Association of Wiping Materials, Used Clothing and Fiber Industries

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SMART MEMBERS

SMART IS A US BASED TRADE ASSOCIATION – MEMBERS ARE
FOR PROFIT TEXTILE REUSE AND RECYCLING COMPANIES

- Used clothing collectors, graders, sorters and brokers – focus on reuse of secondhand clothing and textiles
- Wiping rag companies – focus on reuse of textiles not suitable for secondhand market; pre consumer and post consumer materials used for wiping rags for industrial, consumer, hospital and commercial
- Fiber conversion companies – focus on recycling of materials not suitable for secondhand or wiping rag use; primarily mechanical recycling



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WHERE ARE THEY

SMART Members are from:

- North America – 80%
- India, Pakistan, UAE – 14%
- Central and South America/Europe – 6%



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the secret double life of donated textiles

NEARLY **100%** OF DONATED TEXTILES ARE RECYCLED! They are separated into three grades:



Recycled fiber products **SAVE MONEY** and **RECYCLE** by using existing materials.

Renewed cloth rags use **LESS WATER, LESS ENERGY** and create a **LOWER CARBON FOOTPRINT** than all other alternatives.

CLOSING THE LOOP

The second hand clothing market provides **AFFORDABLE CLOTHING** to those in need and **ENCOURAGES GLOBAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP**.

SECOND LIFE ...



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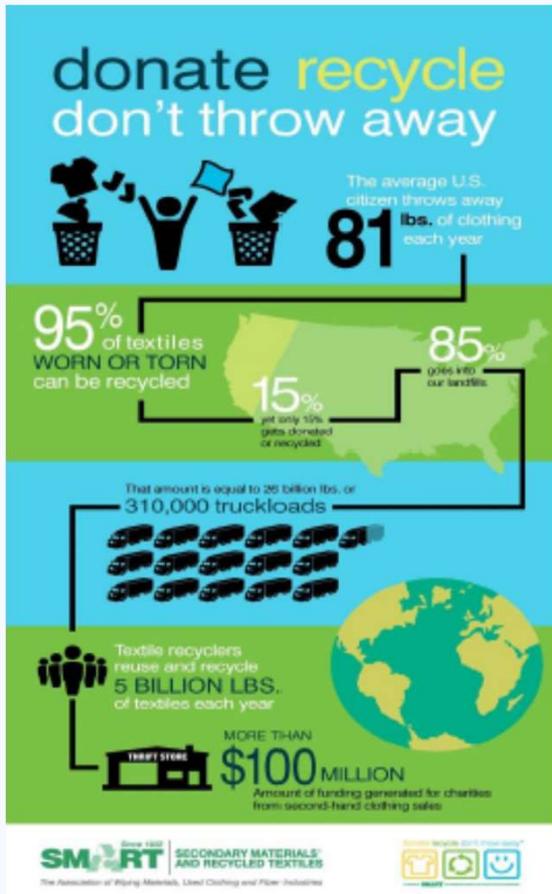
45% sold as secondhand
or used - reuse

30% wiping rags

20% ground into fibers to
make other products

5% unusable

Since 1932
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81 lbs. of clothing per person thrown away in US each year

Only 15% of clothing and textiles are reused and recycled – 5 billion pounds
85% of used clothing and textiles ends up in landfills

5-6% of landfill waste is clothing and textiles= 25 billion pounds

donate recycle don't throw away™

A PROGRAM OF SMART THE SECONDARY MATERIALS AND RECYCLED TEXTILES ASSOCIATION



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WHAT HAPPENS TO USED CLOTHING AND TEXTILES IN US

SMART Members Primarily Collect Textiles in North America

- Some sorting and grading done in the US and Canada; some secondhand sold in thrift outlets in US and Canada; wiping rags sold in North America
- Some members collect materials but do not sort or grade them in North America because of labor costs; these materials are then sold to companies in India, Pakistan and UAE or Central America where they are sorted for graded for specific use (secondhand, wiping materials, fiber) and then exported to buyers around the world.
- Members export used clothing and textiles to Africa, Asia and Central America
- Freight costs for shipping overseas have skyrocketed and limited availability of containers
- Some countries have banned or severely limited exports from US



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CHALLENGES FOR COLLECTIONS

Lagging multi-industry acceptance that Reuse is the highest and best use for the environment

Materials must be clean and dry and have no odor or hazardous chemicals – can't be combined with other recyclables

Secondhand clothing and wiping rag industry has been around for generations, challenge is getting people to not throw materials away and understand reuse and recycling capabilities

Freight costs and container availability



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CHALLENGES FOR COLLECTIONS

Companies that are interested in new technologies (chemical recycling) often have little knowledge of the reuse industry

Retailers that are destroying wearable clothing that could be reused or refurbished for resale continues despite this not making sense from a business or environmental perspective

Fast fashion is a concern because the quality of clothing is inferior and is not good clothing to sell for reuse or make into wiping rags



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Reuse and recycling of textiles has great environmental benefits

Major impact on reducing greenhouse gases – equivalent to removing 1 million cars from US highways

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THANK YOU

WEBSITE www.smartasn.org
Jackie King, jking@misp-amc.com
1-443-640-1050x105

QUESTIONS?

