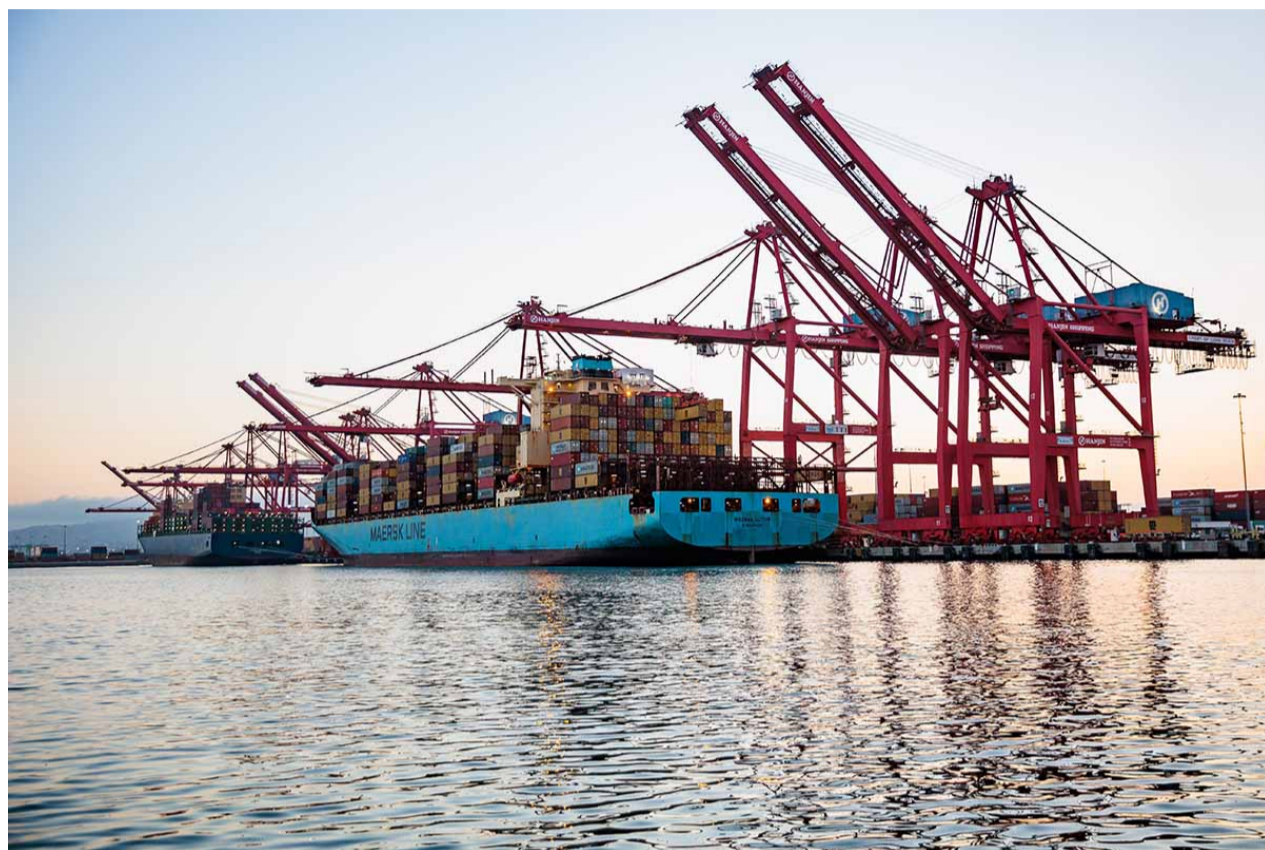


US recovered fiber and plastic exports drop

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by [Jared Paben](#)



U.S. companies exported 8.7 million short tons of recovered paper and OCC during the first half of 2022. | Richard H Grant/Shutterstock

U.S. exports of fiber bales came down slightly during the first half of this year, trade data shows. At the same time, overseas shipments of scrap plastics took a tumble.

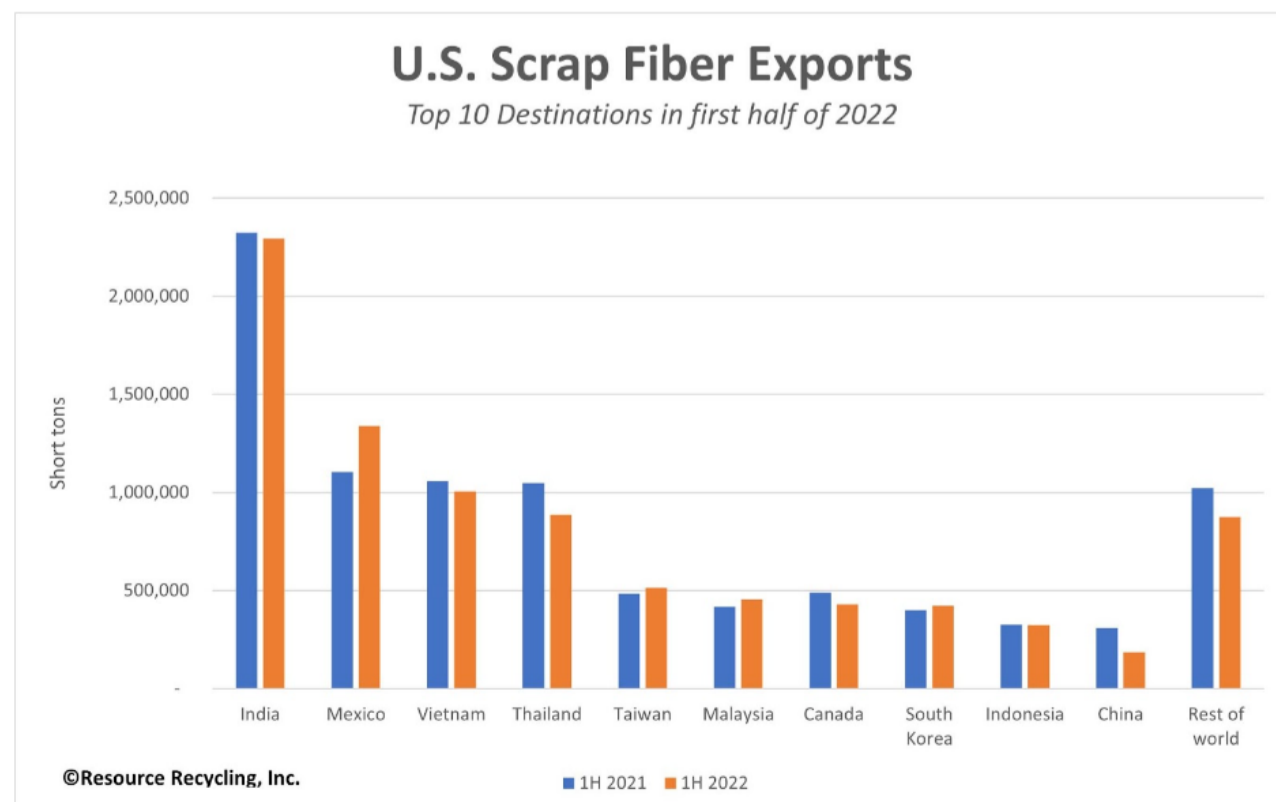
U.S. companies exported 8.7 million short tons of recovered paper and OCC during the first half of 2022, down 3% from the first half of 2021. Meanwhile, exports of scrap plastic totaled 510 million pounds during that time, down 22% year over year.

The U.S. Census Bureau recently released numbers for June, allowing Resource Recycling to compare the first half of 2022 with the first half of 2021.

Fiber exports fall slightly

U.S. fiber exports dropped slightly during the first six month of this year, although shipments to Mexico increased notably.

Here were the top 10 downstream destinations for U.S. scrap fiber during the first half of the year (*story continues below chart*):



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Industry illness and injury rates hit record low in 2021

According to federal data, the waste and recycling industry injury rate fell in 2021, bringing it to the lowest point since 2006.

NRC panelists: Strong EPR requires reduction, transparency

Model extended producer responsibility bills and federal funding were two hot topics at the 2022 National Recycling Congress, with panelists calling for packaging reduction and a broad overhaul of the recycling system.

NERC: Blended average prices fell 40% in third quarter

Northeastern U.S. MRFs reported their recyclables bales fetched an average of \$100 per ton during the third quarter, a steep drop from the prior quarter.

Higher plastic values alleviate some sting from fiber markets

Prices for fiber bales are still searching rock bottom this fall, with OCC down by about 25% over the past month. PET and

In terms of the top destinations during the first half of 2022, India received 2.29 million tons (down 1% year over year), Mexico 1.34 million tons (up 21%), Vietnam 1.01 million tons (down 5%), Thailand 886,000 tons (down 15%), Taiwan 513,000 tons (up 6%), Malaysia 454,000 tons (up 9%), Canada 429,000 tons (down 12%), South Korea 422,000 tons (up 6%), Indonesia 323,000 tons (down 1%) and China 186,000 tons (down 40%). The rest of the world took 874,000 tons of U.S. scrap fiber, down 14% from the first half of 2021 (The numbers above all exclude recycled pulp).

Since China's National Sword campaign kicked off in earnest in 2018, the exports of fiber bales have been dropping, although [they ticked up slightly](#) in 2021.

Resource Recycling [examined first-quarter fiber export stats](#) in June.

Plastic exports fall faster

For years, the [amount of plastic being exported has been falling](#), and this year saw that trend continue.

Here were the top 10 downstream destinations for U.S. scrap plastics during the first half of the year (*story continues below chart*):

Canada received 162 million pounds (down 18% year over year), Mexico 93 million pounds (up 16%), India 52 million pounds (up 33%), Malaysia 51 million pounds (down 57%), Indonesia 25 million pounds (down 13%), Germany 18 million pounds (up 427%), Vietnam 16 million pounds (down 69%), El Salvador 16 million pounds (up 44%), Turkey 14 million pounds (down 18%) and Hong Kong 6 million pounds (down 58%). The rest of the world took in 57 million pounds of scrap plastic exported by the U.S., down 37% year over year.

The top 10 destinations list for the first half of 2022 had some interesting changes. Namely, Germany jumped from No. 19 in the first half of 2021 to the No. 6 biggest downstream destination for U.S. plastic. Taiwan dropped from No. 9 in the 2021 to No. 16 in the latest list.

Plastics Recycling Update [examined the first quarter export stats](#) in June.

More stories about exports

- [Fiber and plastic exports drop 8% and 22%](#)
- [Data Corner: The ongoing decline in US scrap plastic exports](#)
- [Data Corner: The new world order in recovered paper exports](#)

HDPE bales are showing notable price increases however

Oregon MRF becomes first to achieve RIOS certification

Looking to support employees and set a higher bar for quality, Oregon-based Far West Recycling certified its northeast Portland facility to the Recycling Industry Operating Standard. It is the first MRF to do so.

Fiber and plastic exports drop 8% and 22%

U.S. companies exported less scrap paper and plastic during the first nine months of this year, an analysis of federal trade data shows.

Haulers report impact of falling commodity prices

Plummeting recyclables prices took a bite out of the largest haulers' revenues during the third quarter, and executives foresee worse prices to come.

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