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## MEMORANDUM

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**TO:** PROFESSOR ARCHIBALD  
**FROM:** HAYDEN MILLER  
**SUBJECT:** RECOLOGY  
**DATE:** OCTOBER 24 ,2019  
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### **Purpose**

The purpose of this memorandum is to reflect on my trip to the Recology plant in Humboldt county and evaluate the different processes that they use to sort out and recycle the material correctly.

### **Discussion**

The Recology plant collects a mass amount of cardboard, aluminum, tin, glass, and other waste that does not belong there. The place all in all has about 20 people working at one time. They use team work to first sort out the cardboard by using a conveyer belt that has a row of people and each person tries to pick out the cardboard the person in front of them was not able to grab. They do this process twice then sort out any film, then the recyclables go through a conveyer belt and the glass gets sorted out and tossed in a machine the is meant just to break the glass. They use a very light material that moves in an up and down motion that allows the heavier material to drop and keeps the lighter recyclables on top to help sort out certain materials. The only machines that are used at the site is a huge magnet that collects the tin and the glass breaker, so a lot of labor is used for this process. Once all material has been sorted, the recyclables are compacted in huge cubes. One cube of compacted aluminum can weigh up to 2200lbs. If one of these cubes has any amount of garbage oozing through it, they will not be accepted by the company that takes the material. They send all the material to different locations all the way from Portland to China and even Indonesia. China was the biggest place that would take our recyclables, but then stopped taking it until we reduced to contamination of the recyclables, same with Indonesia. Almost all the paper collected would go overseas. We went through an experiment while we were there that consisted of five of our classmates, chosen at random, and were put to the test to try and organized a desk sized pile of a different assortment of items and see if they could pick out the recyclables. The classmates did pretty good and were able to pick out most of the recyclables. One rule of thumb is if it feels like it has a plastic waxy texture then it is most likely not recyclable. It is important to break down cardboard boxes because different items of garbage can get stuck in them and if that happens then there is a possibility that the garbage could get missed and a load will not be accepted.

### **Conclusion**

The trip to the Recology plant allowed for a better understanding of how our recyclables get sorted and where they go. Also, how to better educate myself and others on proper disposal and techniques to help for better recycling habits.