

*Eco-Tip for 3/12/17*

## **Re-Shoring Recycling From China**

By David Goldstein, Ventura County Public Works Agency, IWMD

Discussions of international trade sometimes focus on Chinese policies promoting factories in China. However, the Chinese government recently implemented policies deterring certain types of manufacturing, and this presents Ventura County recyclers with both costs and opportunities.

By volume, America's largest export is recyclables, and China has been the major destination. China's lower labor and environmental compliance costs attracted America's discards, enabling Chinese factories to turn our discards into resources for new products they sell back to us.

However, last month, China enacted "National Sword 2017," an operation enforcing their previously enacted "Green Fence" policy. As reported in Resource Recycling magazine, enforcement "exposed smuggling operations, led to dozens of arrests and resulted in the confiscation of more than 22,000 tons of material."

China's determination to exit certain sectors of the recycling market has made careful, higher-cost domestic recycling more viable, and similar action has benefitted Ventura County in the past. PC Recycle, in Newbury Park, grew from 12 to 18 employees in the past three years, recycling thousands more tons of electronic discards. To ensure safe and clean handling of electronics, local jurisdictions' collection events use only domestic recyclers.

Last week, a Chinese company, previously recycling Ventura County's agricultural plastics in China, began looking for a site to establish a cleaner, more automated version of their factory here in Ventura County. Perhaps this is a sign of more domestic recycling to come.

Keep recycling to save resources, and increasingly, to create American jobs.