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English 10 Honors

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Saving the Planet: Starting with Pocahontas County

Saving Pocahontas County is a priority of mine and I hope yours too. How many times have you walked by a table and seen a plastic bottle? How many times have you drove along ditches and seen plastic bottles or even trash just laying around in them? How many times have you witnessed all the same trash in the same trash can and not separated out in recycling bins? It is my mission to keep my home and community as safe and healthy as possible. It is time to rally together to create the best plastic recycling project known to man.

Recycling should be a big part in our world. It is so easy to do and takes very little time. You can get awarded to recycle because if you take it to a recycling place yourself, they will usually pay you. It will also help our state and they could get some money out of it to help fix any problems that need to be fixed. To recycle it is 100% free to participate (Fletcher).

If we do not recycle there are a lot of damages done to our county, community, and world. When we throw plastic away in the trash, it is taken to the landfill where it gets buried and harmful chemicals are released into the ground water. The plastic poisons our drinking water and our waterways. When we try and burn plastic the poisonous chemicals are released into the air destroying our ozone and breathing abilities. Plastic also changes how our cells multiply and within our bodies, cancer begins to grow.

We are slowly killing ourselves by not being proactive. We are also hurting our wonderful animals. That is why I believe everything that can be recycled should be recycled. There are about 14 billion pounds of trash but mostly plastic that is released into our oceans every year. With all the trash being dumped, there are about 1 million marine animals and birds that are killed every year. Plastic can get wrapped up in animal intestines causing animals to have a painful death. Studies have shown that approximately 90% of seabirds ingest some form of plastic, plastic that they are unable to breakdown and many times are unable to pass through.

Researchers believe that if we do not take a stand, we will have more plastic in the ocean than we do fish (Chow). You might ask, why are you giving me facts about the ocean, it's because all waterways are at risk. Plastic will continue to build up and backup in the rivers and creeks. Pocahontas County, the birthplace of rivers is at risk.

Ask yourself, how many water bottles do you throw away each week? The average person consumes 167 bottles each year. Approximately 38 million bottles are taken to the landfill each year in America. It takes approximately 1000 years for certain parts of plastic to breakdown in a landfill and the other parts will remain as trash forever. There is enough plastic that is thrown away each year to circle the Earth four times (Organization). I bet you didn't know was that it takes approximately 24,000,000 liters of oil to make the billions of bottles created each year. We are destroying our environment by destroying our oil industry and polluting with the plastics created by the oil.

Only about 25 percent of plastic is recycled each year in the United States, leaving 75 percent to be dumped. If you would assist to recycle, other resources will be saved as well, besides the cubic space of land being consumed. One ton of recycled plastics can help save 5,774

kWh of electricity, 685 gallons of oil, 98 Btu's of energy, and 30 cubic yards of land space.

Over the years imagine the savings if we would continue to recycle.

Using reusable water bottles can eliminate approximately 100 plastic bottles that are thrown away each year by every person. It's time we start holding ourselves responsible for the damages we are doing by not taking part in keeping our landfills and waterways plastic free. If you don't like reusing water bottles, then use glass or aluminum cans because they are easily broken down unlike any plastic.

I have a personal plan to assist in keeping our community and state healthier. There are companies that are already functioning. Did you know you can buy shoes that are made of recycled plastic and they feel like a cloth? Other companies that make trash bags, carpet, road cones, kitchenware, shampoo bottles, and certain clothing items are all made from recycled plastic (AGI Publishing). These companies are trying to save the world one bottle at a time.

I am proposing our community to rally together and start recycling. Our county could create a pay scale for recycling through the local landfill. Our county commissioners could reach out to the already established companies and create a deal to sell our bottles to assist them in their factory productions. Our county could provide a tax break to the locals that are willing to recycle, and the poundage could be tracked through a computer program and with each pound, so much could be taken off their yearly tax obligations. This would be a win-win situation for our entire community. Citizens making money on their waste, environment could be saved by the county assisting in eliminating the burying of plastics, and our county could make money through selling the plastics to Corporation America to continue producing their products.

Pocahontas County, West Virginia is a beautiful postcard-worthy sight. Around every bend of the road, you can see wildlife in the fields, eagles flying in the sky, and small streams or rivers flowing with crystal clear water. Why would we not want to keep our home free from toxins? It is our responsibility to be responsible and assist in maintaining the land. My community, Nature's Playground needs, your help before it becomes Nature's Dump Zone. Save our water, soil, and air by helping by recycling. A simple throw of a bottle in one bin versus the trash can will help.

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