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## Bottle ban won't help Orange

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Orange County, which already recycles more plastic bottles than any other county in the state, is being encouraged by state officials to conserve even more.

The N.C. General Assembly placed a ban on disposing plastic bottles, oil filters and wooden pallets in landfills across the state. The ban took effect Thursday.

But while Orange County is running out of space in its landfill, town leaders don't anticipate the ban to help much.

Town officials estimate the Orange County landfill will last only three more years before filling up.

But plastic bottles don't make up much of the landfill's intake, so a ban will not do much to ease the burden, said Blair Pollock of the Orange County Solid Waste Advisory Board.

In Orange County, plastic bottles represent 2.4 percent of household waste, Pollock said. And out of 25,000 tons of residential waste per year in Orange County, only 600 tons are plastic bottles, he said.

"In other terms, it only represents a week of waste," he said.

Still, 19 million plastic bottles are thrown out every year in the county, or about 150 plastic bottles per household, Pollock said.

Orange County recycles 29.42 pounds of plastic bottles per resident per year, almost double the rate of the second-highest county, Pamlico.

The average county in the state recycles 3.81 pounds per resident per year.

The N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources categorizes Orange County as a top recycler in the state.

"The ban will have more effect on people in other jurisdictions," said Jan Sassaman, chairman of the Orange County Solid Waste Advisory Board.

Pollock said the county's recycling program is 22 years old, one of the oldest in the state.

"Recycling is a long-standing tradition here," he said. "It is a combination of the ease of recycling, the availability and the visibility of recycling opportunities.

"There is definitely a culture of recycling in Orange County and this is an expectation of people," he said.

But Pollock said the ease of recycling decreases once people are outside of their homes, and the county still can make progress.

"The infrastructure outside the household is lacking," he said. "Fifty percent of bottles are consumed away from home."

According to the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the state recovers less than 20 percent of the plastic bottles generated in the state.

The purpose of the ban is to boost the state's recycling business, the department said.

Contact the City Editor at [citydesk@unc.edu](mailto:citydesk@unc.edu) [3].

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