

Food waste clogging up California's landfills

By Steve Scauzillo, San Gabriel Valley Tribune

Each year, Americans throw out 66 billion pounds of food – organic material wasting away at the bottom of a landfill.

While successful programs recycle tons of aluminum cans, glass, plastic, cardboard, and newspaper and help account for 63 percent of waste diverted from landfills in California, you can't say the same about table scraps. With no widespread reuse and few programs, food waste has emerged as one of the biggest categories of refuse filling up the nation's landfills, making up 18 percent of the trash buried in California landfills, according to state records.

Aside from the social issues of Americans wasting billions of pounds of food every year, there's an environmental problem. Organic material decomposing in landfills creates methane, which can leak into the atmosphere. Methane is 87 times more potent in terms of warming the Earth than carbon dioxide, the main greenhouse gas, scientists point out.

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