



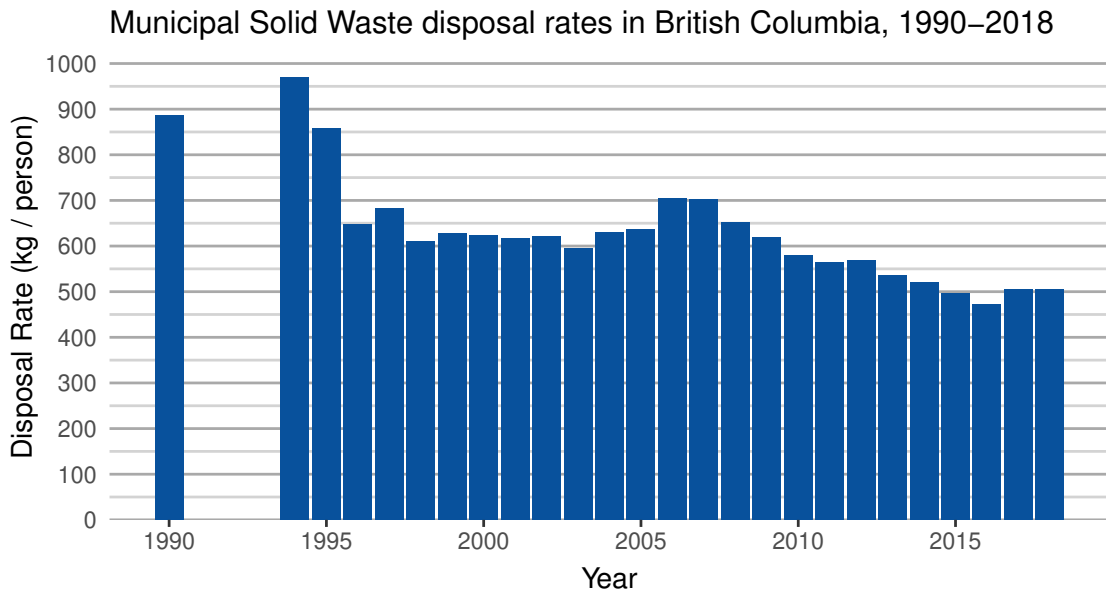
Sustainability

Municipal Solid Waste Disposal in B.C. (1990-2018)

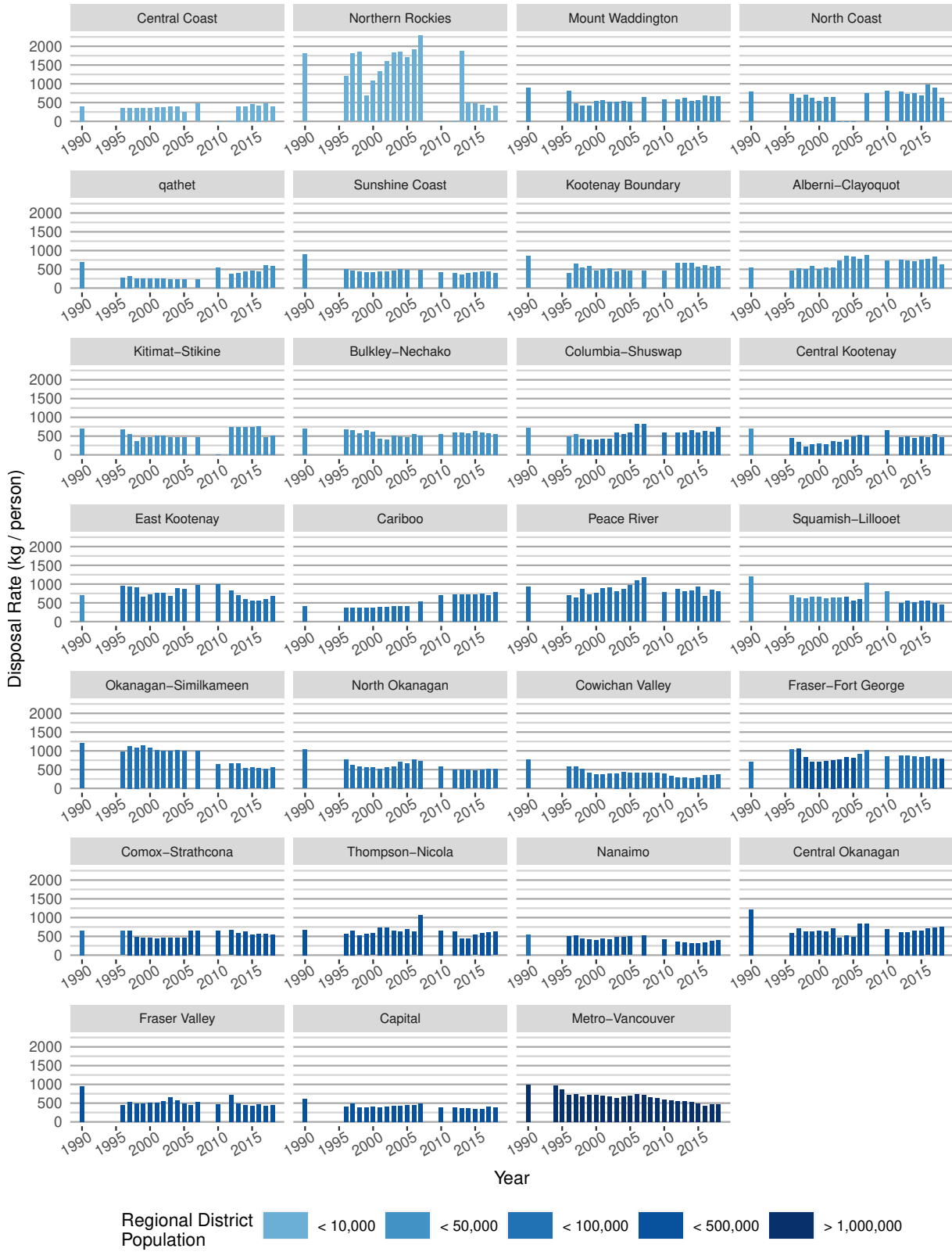
This indicator reports the estimated amount of municipal solid waste disposed per person for each regional district and for British Columbia. Per-person disposal rate is an estimate of how many kilograms of solid waste each BC resident sends to a landfill or other disposal site in a given year.

- Approximately 2.5 million tonnes of municipal solid waste was disposed of in B.C. in 2018. While there has been an overall decreasing trend in municipal solid waste disposal rates since the 1990's, much of the waste disposed of could be reduced (by not being generated in the first place), repurposed, composted or recycled.
- Waste reduction efforts will become more and more important as the [B.C. population continues to increase](#), landfills approach their capacity for receiving new waste, and the imperative to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from waste disposal grows.
- Tracking waste disposal across B.C. is important as it provides historic trend information and the current status of waste disposal—both of which inform and guide efforts to reduce the amount of waste we create.
- In 2018 British Columbians disposed of an average of 505 kg of municipal solid waste per person—down 64 kg per person from 2012. This is a 1 kg/person decrease from the 2017 year. Potential reasons for the higher disposal rate in the last two years include strong economic activity (e.g. strong real estate markets leading to increased building demolition and renovation waste, and high tourism) in some regional districts.
- Provincial initiatives which are expected to decrease waste disposal rates despite strong economic cycles include the Plastics Action Plan, [organics diversion](#), [food waste prevention](#), and [extended producer responsibility](#) programs.
- British Columbia has set provincial waste disposal targets with a long-term goal of lowering the municipal solid waste disposal rate to 350 kg per person by 2020/21.¹
- Variability in disposal rates from one region to the next is influenced by factors such as population density, economic activity, tourist and transient population fluctuations, distance to recycling markets, the role of various stewardship agencies operating in an area and the capacity and infrastructure in place in a region. While disposal rate data don't tell the whole story, they are useful in setting the stage for continuous improvement in waste management in B.C.

The charts below show the estimated per person weight of solid waste disposed of in 2018 for each regional district and the province as a whole, as well as a history of disposal rates for each region.



Municipal Solid Waste disposal rates in B.C. Regional Districts, 1990–2018



What is Included in Disposal Rate?

- Disposal rates reported here include waste from the residential sector, institutional, commercial, and light industrial sources as well as waste from construction, demolition and renovation activities.
- Disposal rates do not include hazardous, biomedical, or agricultural waste, motor vehicles or components, heavy industry, or contaminated soil.
- Waste that is reused or recycled is also not included.

Interpreting the Data:

- 2018 disposal rates were provided by regional districts through the completion of the municipal solid waste disposal calculator.
- Where no bar is shown on a chart for certain previous years, a verifiable estimate was not available.
- Historic disposal rates cannot be directly compared between years because the data were collected using different methods. However, the data from 2012 onward have been collected using the same methodology.
- In some cases, waste from light industry may be included in the municipal solid waste disposal rate data as it cannot be disaggregated.
- Regional District population estimates are sourced from [BC Stats](#). Squamish-Lillooet, Alberni-Clayoquot, Bulkley-Nechako and East Kootenay population estimates have been adjusted based on data submitted by the Regional Districts.
- Disposal rates for Comox Valley and Strathcona are reported as one as they handle their waste stream together.
- The Powell River Regional District is now called qathet Regional District.

Regional districts that wish to update the waste disposal data reported above should contact the Environmental Standards Branch at envprotdiv@Victoria1.gov.bc.ca. Input from regional districts will also serve to inform future waste reporting methodology development. The **R** code supporting this indicator is [available on GitHub](#).

References and Other Useful Links:

- Find out where to recycle using the Recycling Council of British Columbia's [Recyclepedia App](#)
- [Product Stewardship in B.C.](#)
- [Solid Waste Management Planning in B.C.](#)
- [British Columbia's Environmental Management Act](#)
- [Solid Waste Generation in British Columbia: 2010-2025 Forecast \(report and fact sheet\); BC Stats \(2012\)](#)
- [¹British Columbia Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy 2012/21 – 2022/23 Service Plan \(February 2019\) \(PDF\)](#)

Data

*By accessing these datasets, you agree to the license associated with each file, as indicated in parentheses below.

- [Municipal Solid Waste Disposal, 1990-2018](#) (Licence: [Open Government Licence - British Columbia](#))

Published and Available On-Line at Environmental Reporting BC (August 2020): <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/soe/indicators/sustainability/municipal-solid-waste.html>