

# The Helen Delich Bentley Port of Baltimore

## A GREEN PORT by the NUMBERS

750

kilowatts generated with  
Cruise Maryland Terminal  
photovoltaic system

79 PIECES

of equipment retrofitted,  
replaced or upgraded



flex fuel vehicles  
used by the MPA

0

underground  
storage tanks  
remaining by  
end of 2013

11

acres of new  
Masonville Cove  
nature area open  
to public

21%

increase in recycling rate at  
Dundalk Marine Terminal

## Planet Aid: Open For Clothes

Used Apparel Goes  
From Bins to Bales to  
Ship's Containers



The bright yellow bins marked "Planet Aid" are common sights at local shopping centers. Perhaps you've even tossed in a bag of clothes as a donation.

By doing so, you've helped the planet on several levels, from providing economic stimulus in the world's poorest countries to preserving landfill space in the world's richest.

Incidentally, you've also created a demand for the Port of Baltimore's services.

The nonprofit organization's headquarters and its largest warehouse — a 40,000-square-foot facility — are located in Elkridge, Md. "Our primary port is the Port of Baltimore," said Tammy Sproule, Public Relations Manager for Planet Aid. "Because we're sort of central, it's a good hub to be in and it's

BY NANCY MENEFEE JACKSON  
Photography Courtesy of Planet Aid





convenient to our headquarters. Whether trucks are coming down from the north or up from the south, it's a great location. The convenience factor is fantastic; it's perfectly located."

Planet Aid collects clothes and shoes from bins on regular routes in 21 states. The company is especially active along the East Coast from Boston, Mass., down to Raleigh-Durham, N.C.

At 14 regional warehouses, the clothes

and shoes are separated from books and other unrequested items. "We'll get calls from the city because someone has put a sofa by the bin," Sproule said. "We'll take it away because we take responsibility for the areas that surround our bins."

Once at the warehouses, the clothes and shoes are baled without sorting — the 1,000-pound bales may contain everything from a ragged T-shirt to a piece of high-end clothing still sporting price tags. A

wholesaler then buys the bales, which travel by tractor-trailer to the Port of Baltimore for packing in 40-foot containers. About 250 containers are exported through the Port each year.

The common perception is that used clothes end up in thrift shops, but only 20 percent of the recycled clothing collected by all charities in the United States ends up in thrift shops. The large majority is sold in overseas markets.



PHOTOGRAPH BY CAPTAIN WILLIAM BAND AMP

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"The Port of Baltimore is proud to be part of the supply chain for such an inspirational organization as Planet Aid," said Joseph M. Greco, Sr., Deputy Director of Marketing for the Maryland Port Administration (MPA). "To think of all

**The No. 1 reason we want people to donate is to avoid having usable clothing end up in landfills or incinerators.**

~ Tammy Sproule

the lives they have touched and improved, and that we are able to indirectly facilitate these efforts with the rest of the Port community, is special. The ability of Planet Aid to access the world through Baltimore is indicative of the impressive capabilities the Port offers. We hope that our positioning to take more of the U.S. East Coast market share of containers continues to help Planet Aid expand their reach across the globe."

Evergreen Shipping Agency, Maersk Line, Hapag-Lloyd and Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC) have all transported containers of baled clothes to developing countries. Guatemala is a top destination along with Nicaragua and Costa Rica, but shipments are also sent to South America, Africa and India by way of sorting facilities in Europe.

Upon arrival overseas, the bales are sorted and split into smaller bales; for example, a woman with a clothing stall in a local market in Guatemala might buy a 100-pound bale to stock her stall. Lesser-quality items are recycled for use as packaging, insulation or wiping rags. Wool and acrylic fibers are extracted to make yarn for new sweaters.

This reuse also protects the planet: It takes 250 gallons of water to grow enough cotton for one T-shirt, and 20 percent of pesticides used today are used in cotton production, not to mention



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the fuel used to power agricultural equipment. In the United States, 85 percent of surplus clothing ends up in landfills, and when the fibers break down, they release methane, a greenhouse gas.

"The No. 1 reason we want people to donate is to avoid having usable clothing end up in landfills or incinerators," Sproule said. "When you recycle used clothing, you are helping the environment and saving valuable resources. And we try to make donating convenient by putting our bins in many local areas."

Planet Aid uses the proceeds from the sale of clothes to partner with sister organizations in other countries on projects ranging from teacher training to health initiatives aimed at ending epidemics such as AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.

Planet Aid collects about 100 million pounds of unwanted clothing annually, and since 1997, has provided \$70 million in direct or in-kind support to programs on three continents.

"Some of the programs we support empower farmers to engage in sustainable agriculture and to increase their income through the crops they grow," Sproule said. "We also support vocational schools that help young men and women from rural areas gain the skills they need to find work or start their own business. The Port plays a huge role in helping us carry out our mission: to help support these — and other — programs." 🌐

## Planet Aid At-A-Glance

- **Founded in 1997 in Boston, Mass.**
- **Collects used clothing in 21 states and, since 1997, has saved more than 800 million pounds of clothing from wasteful disposal, preventing more than 1.5 million tons of greenhouse gases from entering the atmosphere**
- **Exports 250 containers of baled clothes through the Port of Baltimore annually**

[www.planetaid.org](http://www.planetaid.org)



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