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Earth911®
More Ideas, Less Waste

♺ How to Recycle   📍 Where to Recycle

Inspire & Motivate

Reading time: 2 mins

Earth Action: Cut Paper With Electronic Billing
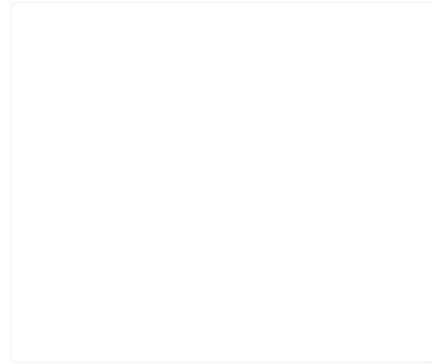
By Gemma Alexander
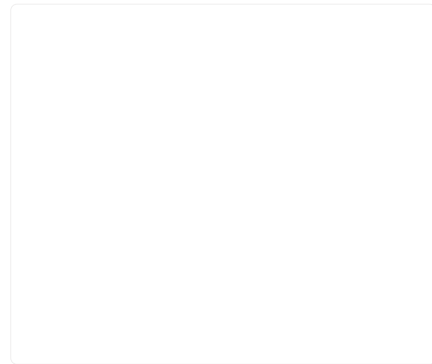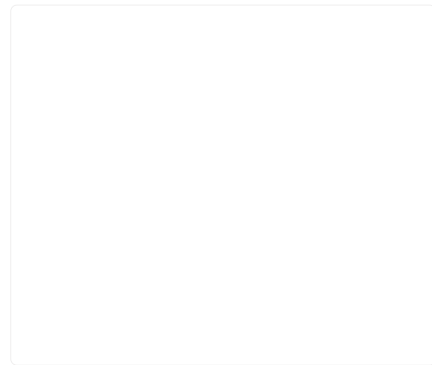
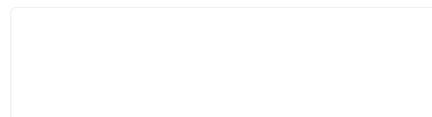🕒 JUL 1, 2022   🏷 earth action, electronic billing, paper waste

This year, Earth911 is honoring Earth Day's 52 years of inspiring action with 52 Actions for the Earth. Each week from Earth Day 2022 to Earth Day 2023, we will share one action you can take to save resources, reduce waste, and make your own life more sustainable. This week, you can **invest in the earth** by signing up for electronic billing.

Paper is one of the easiest materials to recycle, but it still makes up the largest component of Americans' garbage. A full 25% of municipal solid waste (MSW) in America is pap____nd

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Westlake Home – Luxury Organic Bedding

paperboard (also called "cardboard"). Eliminating paper waste completely would require a Herculean effort for most people, but just like going **plastic-free**, you can **cut down your paper waste** by cutting out paper one category at a time.

Action: Sign Up for Electronic Billing

Paper Problems

At the dawn of the digital age, people excitedly dreamed of the paperless office. Decades later, digitizing still hasn't eliminated the need to print all kinds of documents. But household bills really don't need to be printed on paper. Printed bills not only use a lot of paper unnecessarily, but they contain personal information that makes many people uncomfortable simply tossing old bills in the recycling. Shredding protects your data, but **shredded paper** has a low value for recycling, and many curbside programs won't accept it. **Switching to paperless billing** can save as much as 171 pounds of greenhouse gases, 4.5 gallons of gasoline, and 63 gallons of water each year.

Electronic Billing

When electronic billing first became available, many banks charged a fee to set up regular electronic payments, or even fees for each individual electronic transaction. While **avoiding unnecessary bank fees** is still a major life hack, today, most banks are on board with paperless billing. Some of them now even charge a fee for printed monthly statements! Although people used to worry about security with online bill pay, keeping your finances online is **actually safer** than receiving paper in the mail – especially if you live in a neighborhood plagued by porch pirates.

Compared to eliminating junk mail, switching to electronic billing is quite straightforward, if a little tedious. If you are the sort of person who files away paid bills, your action this week is to collect all of your bills from the past month. Visit the web address on each bill and follow the instructions there to sign up for e-billing.

If you don't save old bills, it might be harder to pull everything together to make the switch all at once. In that case, every time you receive a bill for the next month, go online to pay it instead of writing a check. While you're on the website, change your account settings to receive future bills electronically.

Soon your daily stack of mail should begin shrinking. Use your email account's tools to ensure bills don't get buried with the junk email. Flag the senders as important or create folders and filters to collect bills in one "place." You can also set up autopayments. But even if you do, get a secure app to store the passwords to all those websites for the times you need to

log in.

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Reading time: 2 mins

Free Yourself From Single-Use Plastic in July

By Gemma Alexander

Gemma Alexander has an M.S. in urban horticulture and a backyard filled with native plants. After working in a genetics laboratory and at a landfill, she now writes about the environment, the arts and family. See more of her writing here.

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