

A method of processing waste is disclosed wherein the municipal solid waste is segregated and processed to recover reusable rubber, metal, plastic, glass and the remaining organic portion of the waste stream is used to make lactic acid and other chemicals. One process utilizes a pretreatment step with dilute sulfuric acid to reduce the heavy metal content of the cellulose component of the municipal solid waste which may contaminate the produced lactic acid or inhibit the fermentation of the sugars obtained from such waste. In another, the heavy metal content of the cellulose component of municipal solid waste is removed via an ionic exchange process, after hydrolysis with sulfuric acid. A process for an economical, energy efficient production of lactic acid from municipal solid waste is also disclosed.