

# Packaging EPR Talking Points

## Governor Hochul's Budget Proposal for the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Act Solves NY State's Recycling Crisis. Here's How:

1. Local municipal recycling systems are failing and need to be improved and modernized.
  - Municipalities are expected to recycle but have no control over the type of packaging materials brand owners (producers) put into the marketplace, much of which are unrecyclable.
  - Recycling is confusing to many residents.
    - Municipalities have insufficient resources to educate residents on how to properly recycle.
    - Brand owners fail to educate consumers on how to recycle their products and packaging, and often give false or misleading recycling information.
  - Taxpayers and municipalities are left footing the bill for recycling and bear all the financial risk of volatile material recovery markets for plastic, metal, and paper.
  - Municipalities face the stark reality that it is often more expensive to recycle packaging than to trash it. Brand owners do not financially support recycling of their product packaging.
  - This unsustainable system has led to stagnant recycling rates, confusion about what's recyclable, undue financial burdens on taxpayers, and inequitable access to recycling.
2. Under an EPR system, brand owners will finally pay their fair share.
  - Municipalities will receive reimbursement for recycling costs.
  - Under EPR, producers shoulder the financial responsibility of recycling programs, insulating municipalities from financial risks.
  - EPR can invigorate recycling rates for residential materials. Currently, New York loses an estimated 860,000 tons of potentially recyclable materials to trash each year and has a statewide recycling rate under 20%.<sup>1</sup>
  - Existing EPR programs around the world have achieved recycling rates over 70%.<sup>2</sup>
  - EPR will ensure that all New Yorkers have access to strong, consistent recycling programs and are educated on what and how to properly recycle.
  - EPR follows the globally recognized "polluter pays" principle by engaging producers in managing end-of-life packaging and paper products.
3. EPR will modernize and expand New York's recycling system.
  - The program will ensure that all New Yorkers have access to recycling and will upgrade recycling infrastructure to achieve higher recycling rates.
  - The program will provide clear, consistent consumer education, resulting in less confusion for residents.

<sup>1</sup> NYS Comptroller, Local Governments and the Municipal Solid Waste Landfill Business (2018). Retrieved from <https://www.osc.state.ny.us/files/local-government/publications/pdf/landfills-2018.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Extended Producer Responsibility Alliance (EXPRA), Inspiring Packaging Recycling (2018). Retrieved from <http://www.expra.eu/uploads/Brochure-Expra-2018F3.pdf>

- System expansions are expected to create over 1,000 new green sector jobs statewide.<sup>3</sup>
4. EPR is consistent with New York State’s goals for addressing climate change.
    - EPR can lower greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by over 2.3 million metric tons<sup>4</sup> — the equivalent of taking half a million cars off the road or reducing the state’s GHG emissions from waste by 18%.<sup>5</sup>
    - EPR for packaging and paper products is included in the state’s Climate Action Plan as a tool to reduce the impact of the waste sector on GHG emissions.
  5. EPR will reduce packaging waste and foster a circular economy for New York.
    - EPR includes financial incentives for producers to use nontoxic, reusable, or recyclable packaging, and disincentives for producers who make unsustainable packaging choices.
    - Producers will be required to use postconsumer recycled content in their packaging, stimulating recycling markets.
  6. EPR provides flexibility for municipalities to choose whether and how they participate in the program.
    - Local governments will have the option to continue running recycling programs or ask producers to run them.
    - Participating municipalities will be reimbursed by producers for recycling expenses, including education.
    - Local governments and other stakeholders will provide ongoing input into the EPR program through a multi-stakeholder Advisory Council.
  7. There is no evidence that packaging EPR will increase consumer prices.
    - Research has shown that EPR has not increased the cost of consumer goods in existing programs around the world. Studies of similar programs in other countries have found no correlation between EPR policy and higher consumer product prices.
    - “In Europe, we have not seen any noticeable increases in costs for consumers. At the same time, municipalities have avoided having to increase local waste taxes, even while services for the collection of packaging waste increased.” —Joachim Quoden, Extended Producer Responsibility Alliance (EXPRA)

Governor Hochul’s proposal is supported by a broad coalition of municipal, environmental, and waste reduction organizations.

**→ Get involved and use our municipal tool kit to take action: visit [nypsc.org](https://nypsc.org).**

**Continue the conversation:**

Dawn Timm, Chair, New York Product Stewardship Council, [Dawn.Timm@niagaracounty.com](mailto:Dawn.Timm@niagaracounty.com)

<sup>3</sup> US EPA, Recycling Economic Information (REI) Report (2020). Retrieved from <https://www.epa.gov/smm/recycling-economic-information-rei-report#findings>

<sup>4</sup> US EPA, Greenhouse Gases Equivalencies Calculator – Calculations and References (2019). Retrieved from <https://www.epa.gov/energy/greenhouse-gases-equivalencies-calculator-calculations-and-references>

<sup>5</sup> NYSERDA, Greenhouse Gas Emissions Studies (2016). Retrieved from <https://www.nyscrda.ny.gov/About/Publications/EA-Reports-and-Studies/Greenhouse-Gas-Emissions>