

Solving NY State's Recycling Crisis

Support Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for Packaging and Paper Products



The problem

Local recycling programs in NYS are struggling.

Our current recycling system places unreasonable burdens on municipalities to collect, manage, and market recyclable materials. Consumer brand owners

(producers) are disconnected from the end-of-life management of their product packaging. They have no incentive to reduce packaging waste, make packaging easier to recycle,

or boost market demand by using more recycled content. The value of recyclable materials does not cover the cost to collect, process, and market these items. Municipalities face the stark reality that it is often more expensive to recycle packaging than to trash it. This unsustainable system has led to stagnant recycling rates, undue burdens on rate payers, and unequal access to recycling.

The solution: packaging EPR

The proposal for packaging EPR in New York State - S1185C and A 10185 - are designed to reimburse local governments their expenses to collect and process recyclables. Producers will pay for the collection and recycling of the packaging materials they distribute into the state.

- EPR engages producers in managing the end of life of packaging by making them financially responsible.
- **Any impact on consumer prices is unnoticeable.** Studies of similar programs in other countries have found **no correlation between EPR policy and higher consumer product prices.**
- EPR will require producers to fund expansion of infrastructure to modernize the state's recycling system.
- Producers will provide consistent recycling messaging across the state, minimizing confusion and helping people determine what belongs in their recycling bins.
- EPR will insulate municipalities from the financial risk of volatile commodity markets.

Benefits of EPR for packaging & paper products:

- Reimburse local governments for recycling costs
- Increase recycling access for people in underserved communities
- Invigorate stagnant recycling rates — existing programs see rates over 70%¹
- Modernize NYS's recycling system and create over 1,000 green sector jobs²
- Address climate change by lowering green house gas emissions by over 2.3 million metric tons³ — the equivalent of taking half a million cars off the road⁴

¹ Extended Producer Responsibility Alliance (EXPRA), Inspiring Packaging Recycling (2018). Retrieved from <http://www.expra.eu/uploads/Brochure-Expra-2018F3.pdf>

² US EPA, Recycling Economic Information (REI) Report (2020). Retrieved from <https://www.epa.gov/smm/recycling-economic-information-rei-report#findings>

³ US EPA, Greenhouse Gases Equivalencies Calculator – Calculations and References (2019). Retrieved from <https://www.epa.gov/energy/greenhouse-gases-equivalencies-calculator-calculations-and-references>

⁴ NYSERDA, Greenhouse Gas Emissions Studies (2016). Retrieved from <https://www.nyserda.ny.gov/About/Publications/EA-Reports-and-Studies/Greenhouse-Gas-Emissions>

How EPR works



Brand Owners/Producers

- Producers will form one or more nonprofit producer responsibility organizations (PROs).
- **PRO(s) will reimburse municipalities for recycling collection, processing, and education expenses.**
- Brand owners will pay PRO(s) for all packaging materials they use. They will pay less for recyclable materials or products with recycled content to stimulate recycling markets.



Government

- Municipalities have flexibility and choose whether and how to participate in the program. Participating municipalities will be reimbursed for recycling expenses.
- The system **eliminates financial risk** for municipalities from volatile commodity markets.
- The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) maintains oversight, with stakeholder input.



NY Residents

- New Yorkers will have increased access to recycling and clearer messaging on what can be recycled and how.
- **Taxpayers and ratepayers won't be paying into a recycling program overwhelmed by nonrecyclable materials.**
- Residents won't see any noticeable cost increase for the goods they buy. There is no credible evidence indicating EPR will lead to increased consumer prices.

Proven EPR success

Packaging EPR has been successfully implemented for decades in Canadian provinces and throughout Europe and Asia. In these countries, consumer packaging recycling rates have tripled. New York State has existing EPR programs for electronics, rechargeable batteries, and mercury thermostats, and will soon launch EPR programs for leftover paint and pharmaceutical drugs.



Support Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging and Paper Products

The proposal is supported by a broad coalition of municipal, environmental, and waste reduction organizations.

Get involved and take action: visit nypsc.org.



Continue the conversation

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