



Packaging EPR Must Strengthen New York's Recycling System

Local governments urgently need state policy that strengthens our current municipal recycling system. Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for packaging and paper products would stabilize funding, reduce the financial burden on taxpayers, and improve overall system efficiency.

The New York Recycling System Needs Assessment confirms that our current system is both underperforming and expensive. Without reform, local governments will remain constrained in their ability to meaningfully improve waste recovery rates and meet long-term waste reduction targets.

INCLUDE PAPER PRODUCTS

An effective EPR program must stabilize and strengthen the recycling system. It cannot exclude a significant share of commonly recycled materials and still achieve that objective. Exempting paper products such as mail and office paper—materials widely accepted in curbside programs—would leave up to 21% of total program costs uncovered. **To deliver meaningful fiscal relief and measurable performance improvements for municipal governments, full inclusion of paper is essential.**

LIMIT RATEPAYER COST IMPACTS

Taxpayers are funding a system that continues to underperform. Annually, New Yorkers spend \$788 million on recycling[^]. Across the state, programs are capable of capturing 76% of packaging and paper, but only 30%[^] is actually recovered. The overall statewide recycling rate has been stuck for years at an estimated 15%[^]. Recycling Education is underfunded, municipal costs are rising, and volatile commodity markets threaten program stability.

RETHINK PLASTIC PACKAGING REDUCTION FRAMEWORK

Mandating reduction in plastic packaging will compel producers toward heavier, lower-value alternatives that will destabilize recycling economics and increase greenhouse gas emissions from transportation. Combined with volatile and potentially weaker commodity markets; these higher overall costs will ultimately shift to households and ratepayers rather than eliminating them.

[^]Current Recycling Systems in NYS: Residentail, Commercial and Facilities Analysis (CSMM, Oct. 2025)