Colorado needs a recycling system that is convenient, equitable, and financially-sustainable.

SUPPORT AN EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY (EPR) POLICY FOR PACKAGING AND PRINTED PAPER

Colorado is one of the worst states at recycling. Our recycling rate is a dismal 16%, only half the national average of 32%. An EPR policy is one of the most powerful opportunities to improve our recycling programs. It would require consumer goods companies to fund recycling programs so we can ensure that every Coloradan has convenient, easy access to recycling for packaging materials such as plastic bottles, aluminum cans, glass bottles, cardboard, and printed paper.

THROUGH AN EPR SYSTEM FOR PACKAGING AND PAPER PRODUCTS, COLORADO COULD:

- Increase our recycling rate and reduce climate pollution.
- Provide all residents with convenient access to recycling in both urban and rural areas.
- Eliminate the additional fee that residents currently pay for curbside recycling.
- Expand equitable access to recycling for multi-family properties like apartment buildings.
- Develop a clear common list of what can be recycled statewide.
- Boost local economies by supporting businesses that use our recycled materials to make new products.
EPR FOR PACKAGING CAN ACCELERATE RECYCLING IN COLORADO

Colorado is committed to increasing our recycling rate and is investing in new recycling programs, policies and infrastructure to expand and improve our statewide recycling system. By recycling more, Colorado will reduce climate pollution, protect our clean air and water, and create jobs. However, the investment needed to expand and improve our statewide recycling system cannot and should not be the sole responsibility of local or state government, recycling facility operators, waste haulers or taxpayers. Consumer goods companies need to play a substantial role in increasing the recycling of their products and packaging as well. This includes helping to finance recycling infrastructure, operations and education programs through Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) policies.

EPR programs for packaging (i.e. cans, bottles) and paper products (PPP) are common in the E.U. and Canada, and momentum is accelerating in the U.S. A federal EPR bill was introduced in early 2020 and at least eight states are exploring EPR for packaging. Consumer goods companies are increasingly turning toward EPR policies to help reduce plastic pollution and to meet their recycling and sustainability goals.

Colorado’s EPR program for paint, in place since 2015, has successfully increased paint recycling rates, provided greater access to collection sites, and reduced costs to cities and counties that previously paid for this service. Nearly 95% of Colorado residents now have access to paint recycling within 15 miles.

An EPR policy for packaging in Colorado is a tremendous opportunity to transform our recycling system and accelerate progress toward our state recycling goals. Now is the time for government and consumer goods companies to work together to adopt an EPR policy that will build a convenient, equitable, and financially-sustainable recycling system in Colorado.

EPR is a mandated policy that shifts the responsibility for end-of-life management of products and packaging upstream to producers – rather than the public sector – and creates incentives for producers to incorporate environmental considerations into the design of their products and packaging.

In 2020, the Colorado legislature passed Senate Bill SB20-055 to grow recycling programs statewide. As one part of this legislation, CDPHE is conducting a study on EPR programs in other states, engaging stakeholders in EPR options, and developing policy recommendations to help guide Colorado. Learn more and become a stakeholder.

Learn more and get involved at www.ecocycle.org/zerowaste/overview/producer-responsibility.