

Did you know...

WA's overall recovery rate is **49%**, significantly higher than the national average of 32%. We recycle at least 40% of our packaging.

WA's solid waste and recycling industry was **4.1x carbon net zero in 2018** after accounting for landfill and collection emissions and the reduction of greenhouse gases from more materials successfully recycled or composted.

WA is already working to divert 75% of organics waste from landfills by 2030 (HB 1799), resulting in **552,000 fewer tons of greenhouse gas emissions**.

87% of WA residents have access to curbside service and those who don't may access 108 dropbox locations in their communities.

The average household's monthly bill for curbside recycling service is \$8-10, supporting an average of 8 monthly bin pickups of bins for trash (4), recycling (2) and organics (2) with service unique to local needs.

The solid waste and recycling industry **employs about 14,700 workers** to drive trucks, sort materials at Material Recovery Facilities, oversee landfills and much more.

Implementing SB 5284 – The Work Ahead

The adoption of SB 5284, the Recycling Reform Act (RRA), by the 2025 Legislature to implement an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) program in Washington for packaging materials codifies specific milestones to inform the development of the expansive and complex new system for recycling in our state. As a decades-long partner with public agencies and consumers to advance the shared value of environmental stewardship, the regulated waste and recycling industry in Washington looks forward to offering its expertise to policymakers.

The Department of Ecology will oversee a Producer Responsibility Organization (PRO), a consortium of packaging manufacturers. The PRO will adopt a plan that defines details such as levels of service, collection frequency and container size.

What Will Change?

- Expanded Curbside Recycling: Curbside recycling will be available wherever curbside garbage is provided after 2030.
- Statewide Collection List: Every jurisdiction will have the same curbside collection list to reduce confusion about what materials go in the recycling bin.
- Higher Grocery Costs: Instead of a recycling bill every month, consumers will pay an unlisted amount for recycling at the store as producers embed the cost of expanding recycling into the price of every covered product purchased, likely [increasing the cost of groceries by 5-10%](#) based on [other jurisdictions](#).
- New Reporting and Performance Requirements for recycling service providers, particularly Material Recovery Facilities with new labor requirements.

The RRA also defines standards for how the PRO will reimburse recycling industry service providers for collection and infrastructure operations/investments.

2025 – 2026 Milestones

- Starting in 2025, the regulated solid waste and recycling industry is beginning the work to register as service providers under the new EPR system.
- In January 2026, an Advisory Council will form to offer comments on draft PRO plans as EPR rules development begins. A study on a bottle deposit program will also be published.
- By March 2026, Ecology will register a PRO for Washington State.
- A second study on a bottle deposit program will include a comment period during Summer 2026 (due in 2027).
- By October 2026, an initial statewide list of recyclable materials will be completed, closely followed by the completed preliminary Needs Assessment in December.

2027 (and beyond)

The second bottle deposit program study will be due to the Legislature in **January 2027**. By **May 2027**, the PRO will pay its annual registration fee and establish an internal fee structure. The Needs Assessment will be completed by **December 2027**. In **January 2028**, Ecology will adopt final rules to administer and implement packaging EPR. A cost analysis will also launch that month to review the consumer impacts on prices, bottle deposit returns and general equity issues under the PRO's plan. The PRO's plan will be submitted to the Advisory Council in **August 2028** and will be submitted to Ecology by October. In **January 2029**, Ecology will create a model comprehensive solid waste plan amendment, though SB 5284 specifies that the PRO's plan cannot be adopted until after the **2029 Legislative Session**, pending review by lawmakers. In **March 2029**, any producers not registered with the PRO will be prohibited from selling products in Washington and enforcement by Ecology will begin.

The Long Road Ahead....

2030

- EPR will go into effect by January or within 6-months of the plan's approval by the Legislature. The program will include: statewide list for recycling collected wherever curbside service is provided, expanded drop-off recycling, new labor and reporting requirements for Materials Recovery Facilities, mandated registration for service providers and reimbursement by the PRO to service providers.

2031,
2032 and
beyond

- PRO will begin annual reports to be reviewed by Ecology and annual service provider registration continues.
- Recyclables collected must be sent to certified responsible end markets.
- As required by SB 5284, Ecology's study on the equity impacts of EPR is due January 2032.
- The PRO Plan will be updated in 2033-34 and a review study of the overall EPR program will be published in 2038.

Partnering to Expand Environmental Stewardship

While other states are trying to catch up to Washington's leadership on recycling by creating brand new programs, our state has the opportunity to continue growing its commitment to environmental stewardship by taking advantage of its decades of leadership in reducing waste and increasing recycling.

As the Legislature debated the structure for a new and broad Extended Producer Responsibility program for packaging, the regulated solid waste and recycling industry and other stakeholders raised concerns about the higher costs being passed down to consumers for common grocery items. In its decades-long partnership with consumers in providing affordable, accessible and effective recycling services, the regulated industry will continue to offer opportunities to continue supporting Washington's legacy of low-cost and convenient access to recycling.

For difficult to recycle products such as textiles and mattresses, the regulated industry advocates for adopting Extended Producer Responsibility programs to recycle more of these materials which has proved successful for other difficult materials in our state, such as batteries. The regulated industry is also exploring opportunities to reduce the amount of single-use plastics and increase the use of Post-Consumer Recycled Content (PCRC) in products and packaging.

The regulated industry will continue to **raise concerns about creating a new, duplicative, bottle deposit program** in our state that would raise cost and convenience barriers for consumers to recycle, who will be asked to walk past the recycling bin at their curb and drive to a deposit center to avoid an extra fee on their groceries. The last state to adopt such a program was Hawaii in 2002 and the average age of these programs is 47 years, a recognition of the superior service and effectiveness of curbside recycling. Pervasive public safety concerns surrounding bottle deposit centers in Oregon have led to centers being closed as a tactic to reduce illicit activity.

About Us

The Washington Refuse & Recycling Association (WRRRA) represents solid waste companies and professionals in Washington State. Our mission is to promote environmentally and economically sustainable solid waste and recycling services within our state's regulatory system. The WRRRA is a partnership with the public in pursuit of environmental stewardship through recycling and reducing waste.

Want to Learn More? Please contact Brad Lovaas, WRRRA executive director, at brad@wrra.org or (360) 280-7723.