



# Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Extended Producer Responsibility Commission

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ADVISORY GROUP: PLASTICS AND PACKAGING MEETING 2

Thursday, August 28, 2025 | 10 a.m.–noon  
via Zoom

# Housekeeping

## Housekeeping

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- Please put your full name and affiliation in the chat
- Be sure to change your Zoom display name to include your affiliation as well



## Reminders regarding advisory groups

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- Charged with **performing research and presenting findings** to the Commission
- Advisory groups will meet at least twice; this is the second meeting of the plastics and packaging EPR advisory group
- Draft background document on plastics and packaging to share with the Commission is due **Friday, October 3**
- Initial EPR Commission meeting on plastics and packaging is **Wednesday, October 29, 2025, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.**

## Meeting goals

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- Review content supplied since Meeting 1
- Assess missing data
- Discuss preliminary pros and cons of a plastics and packaging EPR approach that the Commission should weigh

## Meeting agenda

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- Brief presentation of combined findings
- Discussion: questions? missing data? pros and cons of plastics and packaging EPR approach?
- Next steps
- Meeting feedback

# Presentation



## Defining packaging for EPR



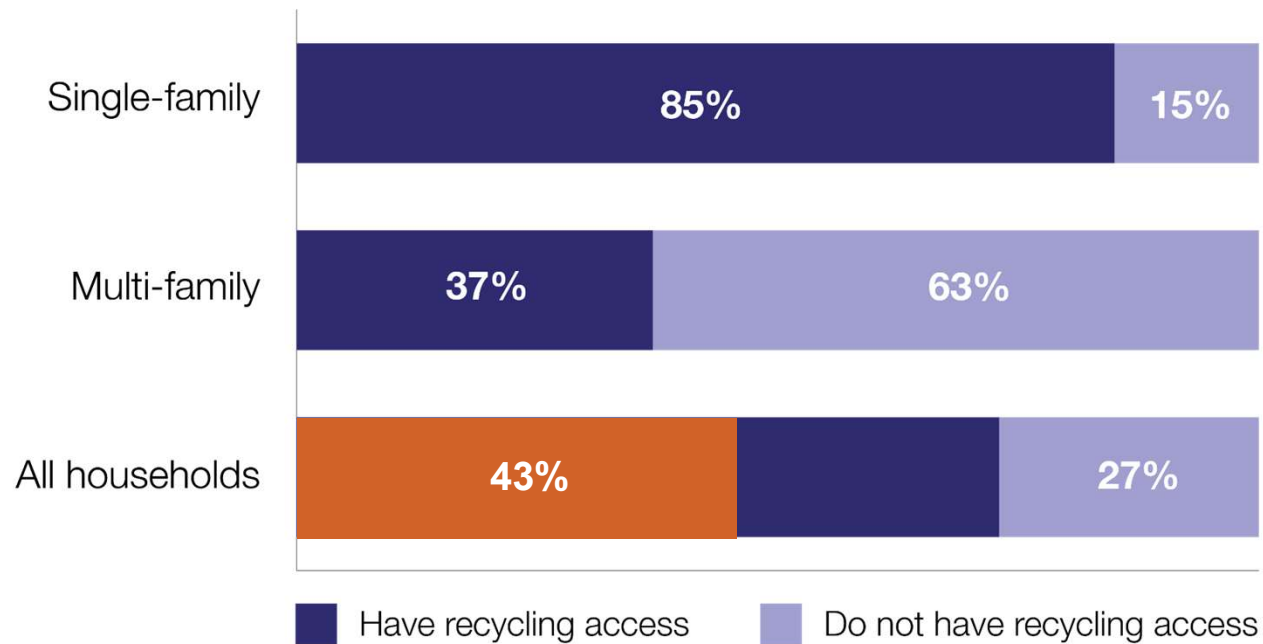
- Glass
- Steel
- Aluminum
- Paper and paperboard
- Plastic
- Wood
- Miscellaneous





# U.S. packaging recycling access

**Figure.** — Recycling access for U.S. households (2024 data)

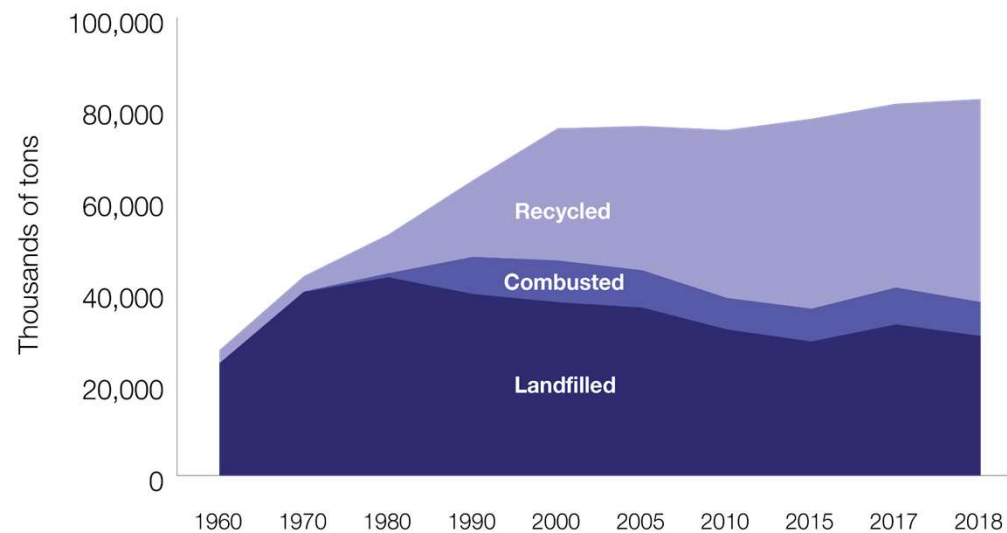


Source: The Recycling Partnership, State of Recycling: The Present and Future of Residential Recycling in the U.S., 2024



## Recycling rates: U.S.

**Figure.** — Containers and packaging waste management: 1960–2018

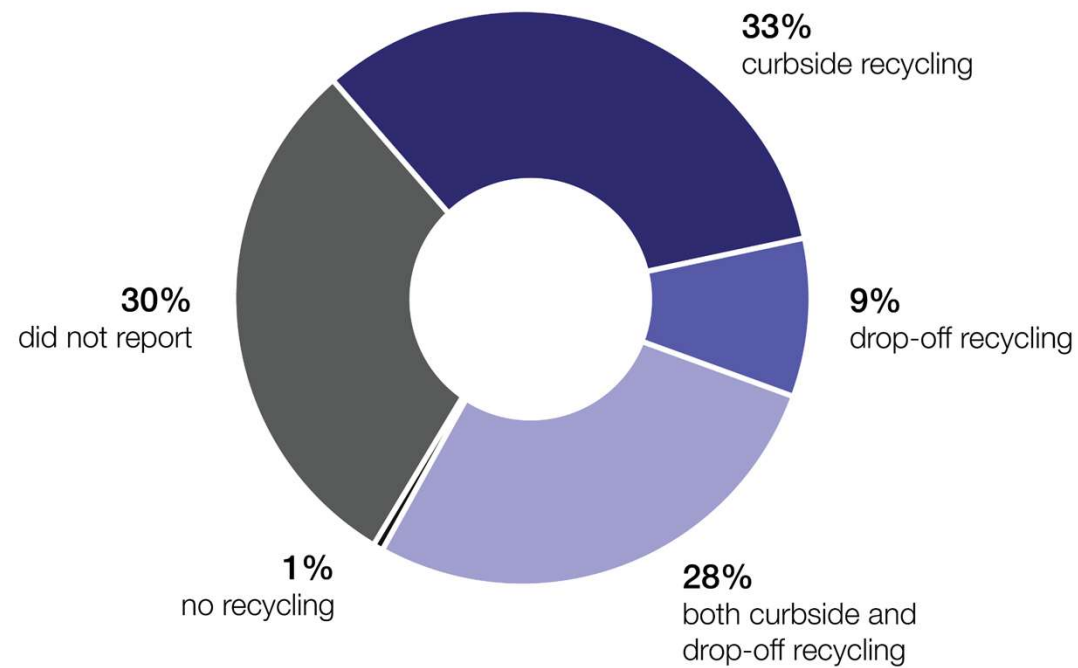


- The EPA set a national goal of achieving a 50% recycling rate by 2030.
- National overall recycling rates hover around 32.1%, based on 2018 EPA data—or 21% per The Recycling Partnership
- In 2018:
  - 53.9% of packaging products were recycled
  - 21.5% were combusted with energy recovery
  - 20.9% were landfilled

# Massachusetts recycling access



**Figure.** — Recycling access for Massachusetts households (2024 data)



Source: Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Department of Environmental Protection, 2024 Municipal Solid Waste and Recycling Survey Responses.



# Recycling rates: Massachusetts

**Table.** — Massachusetts residential recycling rates by material category (in tons per year)\*

| Material             | Recycling rate | Material                      | Recycling rate |
|----------------------|----------------|-------------------------------|----------------|
| Cardboard            | 37%            | Non-bottle PET                | 11%            |
| Mixed paper          | 28%            | HDPE natural bottles and jars | 30%            |
| Aseptic and gabletop | 4%             | HDPE colored bottles and jars | 27%            |
| Glass containers**   | 41%            | Polypropylene                 | 12%            |
| Steel cans           | 23%            | Plastics #3, 4, 6, and 7      | 1%             |
| Aluminum cans        | 35%            | Bulky rigid plastics          | 0.4%           |
| PET bottles          | 34%            | Film                          | 0.01%          |

\*includes material captured through state deposit return systems

- The overall Massachusetts recycling rate is around 27%, according to The Recycling Partnership

# Costs of recycling to Massachusetts municipalities

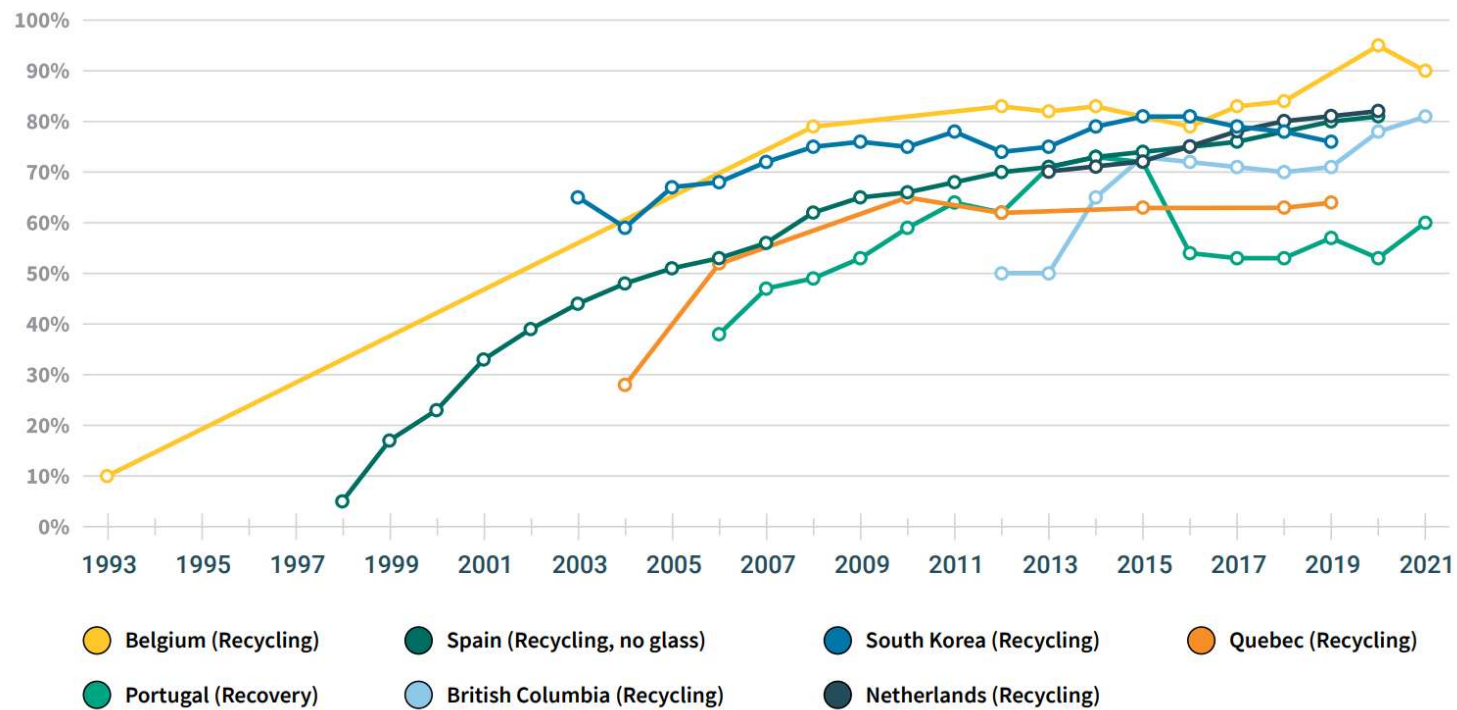


- Market fluctuations for post-consumer recycled content make it challenging for municipalities to predict waste management budgets.
- The cost per ton of recycling increased from \$5 in 2017 to \$140 in 2020 in Massachusetts.
- The Massachusetts Municipal Association purports an 18% increase in municipal solid waste disposal and recycling processing costs between 2021 and 2024, likely a result of more single-stream recycling programs statewide.



# Packaging EPR in Europe and Canada

**Table.** — EPR packaging recycling rates in Europe and Canada



# Packaging EPR in other states



**Table.** — EPR packaging laws in the U.S.

|                           | <b>ME</b>        | <b>OR</b>       | <b>CO</b>    | <b>CA</b>    | <b>MN</b>               | <b>MD</b>           | <b>WA</b>               |
|---------------------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Signed into law           | Jul 2021         | Aug 2021        | Jun 2022     | Jul 2022     | May 2024                | May 2025            | May 2025                |
| Implementation date       | Fall 2026        | <b>Jul 2025</b> | Jul 2026     | Jan 2027     | Jan 2029<br>(tentative) | 2028<br>(tentative) | Jan 2030<br>(tentative) |
| Packaging covered         | √                | √               | √            | √            | √                       | √                   | √                       |
| Paper products covered    |                  | √               | √            |              | √                       | √                   | √                       |
| Food service ware covered |                  | √               | √            | √            | √                       | √                   | √                       |
| Multiple PRO(s) possible  |                  | √               | After 2028   | After 2030   | After 2031              | After 2033          | After 2035              |
| Producer funds system     | 100%             | ~28%            | 100%         | 100%         | Phased                  | Phased              | Phased                  |
| Eco-modulated fees        | State regulation | PRO proposes    | PRO proposes | PRO proposes | PRO proposes            | PRO proposes        | PRO proposes            |
| Performance targets       | State regulation | In statute      | PRO develops | In statute   | PRO proposes            | PRO proposes        | PRO proposes            |



## Four general packaging EPR mandates

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To comply with packaging EPR laws, producers must:

- **Join a producer responsibility organization (PRO).** PROs are responsible for collecting fees, managing recycling programs, and ensuring compliance.
- **Report packaging data.** Brands must track and submit detailed information about the materials used in their packaging.
- **Pay eco-modulation fees.** Producers are charged variable fees based on their packaging's sustainability. Recyclable, reusable, and compostable materials lead to lower fees, while non-recyclable materials incur higher charges.
- **Help meet recycling targets.** Producers are required to support state-specific recycling goals by designing their packaging more sustainably.





## Four reported benefits of packaging EPR

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- 1. Access and participation.** EPR shifts the financial responsibility for recycling from taxpayers to the producers of products. This funding ensures a more robust and equitable recycling system.
- 2. Infrastructure.** Under EPR, producers must invest in recycling infrastructure to meet performance standards, which encourages long-term investment in a more efficient recycling system.
- 3. Education.** EPR programs provide significantly more funding for recycling education.
- 4. Market stability.** EPR provides a stable funding source that insulates the recycling system from the unpredictable market for recycled materials.

## Discussion

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- What questions do you have that would help clarify the right path to plastics and packaging EPR? What data is missing?
- What are the pros and cons you see of existing EPR programs throughout Canada, Europe, and the U.S. that you feel the EPR Commission should weigh?

## Next steps

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- Draft background document on electronics to share with the Commission is due **Friday, August 29**
- Initial EPR Commission meeting on electronics is September 17, 2025, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Feedback