# Washington House approves Recycling Reform Act to introduce producer responsibility programme



The Washington House of Representatives has taken a significant step towards reforming the state's recycling system with the approval of the Recycling Reform Act (SB 5284), a bill designed to introduce an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) programme for packaging. The legislation, which passed with amendments, now moves back to the Senate for concurrence before it can be signed into law.

The bill proposes the creation of a producer responsibility organisation that would require manufacturers and consumer brands to take greater accountability for packaging waste. This includes initiatives to reduce excess packaging, fund statewide recycling collection services, and ensure effective processing of materials placed in curbside recycling bins.

Senator Liz Lovelett (D-Anacortes), the bill’s lead sponsor, described the legislation’s passage as a “historic step forward for our state to a cleaner, more accessible, and more sustainable recycling system.” She added, “Today we are all celebrating progress to reduce pollution, improve recycling rates, and divert materials away from landfills.”

If enacted, Washington will become the seventh U.S. state to implement an EPR programme for packaging, joining Maine, Oregon, California, Colorado, Maryland, and Minnesota. The policy mirrors successful models, such as that in British Columbia, which has operated a province-wide EPR programme for over ten years.

Representative Liz Berry (D-Seattle), sponsor of the companion bill in the House, praised Senator Lovelett’s partnership in advancing the policy. “I am excited that Washington will have a better recycling system that holds producers responsible and gives all communities access to recycling,” Berry stated.

EPR programmes hold companies accountable for the environmental impact of their product packaging after it reaches consumers. This includes various materials like plastic bottles, metal cans, glass containers, and paperboard boxes. Washington’s programme is projected to be fully implemented by 2030.

Currently, more than half of all packaging and paper waste in Washington ends up in landfills, with only 58% of jurisdictions offering curbside recycling and 11 counties lacking any service. The state’s Department of Ecology, which would oversee the programme, anticipates that the legislation will expand recycling access to an additional 500,000 households, particularly in rural and multi-family housing areas.

The new system would shift the primary costs of collection and processing from local governments to packaging producers, potentially reducing utility bills for residents. The Senate is expected to vote on the amended bill during the final days of the legislative session, scheduled to adjourn on 27 April.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.swca.com/news/2025/01/unpacking-epr-series-the-basics-of-extended-producer-responsibility-epr-packaging-laws> - Explains EPR's role in reducing landfill waste, increasing recycling, and incentivizing sustainable packaging design, aligning with the bill's goals.
* <https://epr.sustainablepackaging.org> - Defines EPR as a policy holding producers accountable for end-of-life product management, corroborating the bill's producer responsibility framework.
* <https://rev-log.com/us/epr-laws-for-packaging-in-the-united-states-where-are-we-now/> - Details obligations under EPR laws, including joining PROs and reporting packaging data, mirroring the bill's requirements for producers.
* <https://blog.sourceintelligence.com/packaging-epr-laws-in-the-us> - Describes EPR programs requiring producers to fund statewide recycling/composting infrastructure, supporting claims about cost-shifting to manufacturers.