

POLICY SOLUTIONS TO IMPROVE PLASTICS RECYCLING

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Who is APR?

APR is an international non-profit and the only North American organization focused exclusively on improving recycling for plastics. (APR)

What Do We Do?

Our mission is simple: **RECYCLE MORE PLASTICS** to reduce waste.

STEPS OF PLASTICS RECYCLING

Collecting



Haulers collect mixed recyclables from homes and businesses.

Sorting



Material recovery facilities (MRFs) sort types of plastics into bales.

Processing



Reclaimers sort, grind, wash, and process plastics into pellets, flakes, or sheet.

Reclaimers and recyclers are the CORE of APR

Manufacturing



Converters use recycled plastics to make new products.



RECYCLING IS AN ESSENTIAL SOLUTION TO REDUCE PLASTIC POLLUTION



Source: OECD (2024), Policy Scenarios for Eliminating Plastic Pollution by 2040.

APR PRIORITY POLICIES TO IMPROVE PLASTICS RECYCLING



Design

Harmonized design standards can help reduce consumer confusion and increase participation in recycling, streamline processing, and deliver higher quality recycled plastics.



Collection

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) laws provide the needed funding and coordination to expand local recycling programs. Bottle deposit programs improve recycling and reduce litter for beverage containers.



Remanufacturing

Economic policies are needed to push companies to manufacture with recycled plastics instead of virgin plastic, including minimum recycled content requirements, tax credits, and other economic tools.



WHY, WHERE & HOW TO USE RECYCLED CONTENT



WHY RECYCLED CONTENT POLICIES: Using recycled plastic saves energy and reduces climate emissions



Reduce energy consumption by at least 79%

Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 67%





PRIMARY END MARKETS FOR RECYCLED PLASTIC PACKAGING

rPET	MM lbs
Fiber (polyester carpet, clothing)	667
Food & beverage bottles	455
Sheet & film	243
Strapping	122
Non-food bottles	111
Other	43

rPE film	MM lbs
Lumber & decking	450
Sheet & film	332
Injection molding (pallets, buckets,	
crates)	117
Other	78

rHDPE	MM lbs
Non-food bottles	570
Pipe (construction, agriculture)	506
Lumber & decking	122
Lawn & garden	113
Automotive	106
Film/sheet	49
Other	49
Crates & buckets	4.6
Pallets	1.5

rPP	MM lbs_	
Paint buckets, crates, pallets, pipe	477	

Millions of pounds per year (2018-2019); Source

RECYCLING IS A BUSINESS



1. Recyclers must be able to sell recycled content to cover costs.

- 2. Recycled content competes directly on the market against virgin plastic.
- 3. Growth of recycling depends on increased use of recycled plastics in manufacturing.



CORE PROBLEM: ECONOMICS FAVOR VIRGIN PLASTIC

- Oversupply of virgin plastic for next few years
- Brand companies pulling back from voluntary commitments
- Costs of recycled content: collection, labor, sorting

Petrochemical glut makes new plastic cheaper than recycled January 2024 | Financial Times | <u>Source</u>

Surge in manufacturing in China and US leads to oversupply of products such as polyethylene



OVERCAPACITY IN PET PRODUCTION SIMILAR ACROSS ALL RESINS





(% AAGR = 18-23/23-33)

Source: Chemical Market Analytics by OPIS

Attribution: Chemical Market Analytics by OPIS, a Dow Jones Company

DEMAND SIDE POLICY SOLUTIONS



POLICY SOLUTIONS TO PRIORITIZE RECYCLED CONTENT USE



Minimum recycled content requirements



Government procurement



Federal subsidies for recycling infrastructure



Tax credits for PCR purchases



Carbon taxes or plastic taxes



Voluntary pledges



LESSONS FROM THE RENEWABLE ENERGY TRANSITION

29 states + DC had RPS targets to guarantee demand for new renewable energy projects and investments.

We can follow a similar path for recycled content requirements.

Renewable Portfolio Standards State by State

Twenty-nine states and Washington D.C. have renewable energy standards—policies to increase the percentage of their electricity generated from clean sources. Eight states have voluntary renewable energy targets, and 13 states have no mandate or voluntary program.





MINIMUM RECYCLED CONTENT LAWS FOR PLASTIC PACKAGING





Map by PresentationGO.com

RATES & DATES ON US RECYCLED CONTENT LAWS



STATE	PRODUCT TYPE	INITIAL RATE	SECOND TARGET	FINAL TARGET
CA	Beverage bottles (glass and plastics)	2022*: 15%	2025: 25%	2030: 50%
CA	Rigid plastic packaging container	1995: 25%		
CA	Reusable plastic grocery bags	2016: 20%	2020: 40%	
CA	Trash bags	1998: 10%		
WA	Plastic beverage bottles	2023: 15%	2026: 25%	2031: 50%
WA	Plastic wine containers (187 ml); Dairy milk containers	2028: 15%	2031: 25%	2036: 50%
WA	Plastic household cleaning & personal care products	2025: 15%	2028: 25%	2031: 50%
WA	Plastic trash bags	2023: 10%	2025: 15%	2027: 20%
NJ	Plastic beverage containers	2024: 15%	Up 5% every 3 years	50%
NJ	All other rigid plastic containers	2024: 10%	Up 10% every 3 years	50%
NJ	Plastic carryout bags	2024: 20%	2027: 40%	
NJ	Plastic trash bags (varies by bag thickness)	2024: 5-20%	2027: 10-40%	
ME	Plastic beverage containers	2026: 15%	2031: 30%	
СТ	Plastic beverage containers	Report by end 2023	2027: 25%	2032: 30%

* Dates are January 1 unless otherwise noted

KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR RECYCLED CONTENT POLICIES

COMBINE WITH POLICIES TO INCREASE COLLECTION/SUPPLY

- Majority of recyclable plastics are not put in recycling bins: <30% of recyclable plastic bottles collected from US households; policies are needed to collect more recyclable plastics
- Innovation, policy, and funding needed to collect non-packaging plastics: textiles, carpet, automotive, construction materials, etc.

INCLUDE ALL TYPES OF PLASTICS USES

- Widespread opportunity to use more recycled plastic
- Recycled content in food-contact packaging faces more technical challenge
- Prioritize non-food contact packaging and durable applications in short term secondary packaging, pipe, decking, etc.
- Reasonable exemptions for high-performance products (medical, etc.)



STUDY SHOWS RECYCLED CONTENT IS STRONGEST GLOBAL POLICY TO REDUCE PLASTIC WASTE



(APR)



TAKEAWAY MESSAGES



Recycling is an essential part of comprehensive strategy to reduce plastic pollution.



Policies needed to drive more robust, stable demand for recycled plastics to displace virgin plastic use.



Recycled content mandates can be used similar to renewable energy standards.



Recycled content can be used in nearly all packaging and non-packaging applications.







Thank you!



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