

Myths vs. Facts

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)

Well-designed EPR policy in Tennessee will:

- ✓ **Deliver an efficient recycling system** that keeps valuable resources in productive use and reduces waste.
- ✓ Provide **all Tennesseans with equitable access** to recycling services.
- ✓ **Save money for communities** while *not increasing consumer costs*



Myth

Tennessee doesn't need to recycle better



Fact

Tennessee has a residential recycling rate of 12%.

Residents of Tennessee deserve to have a better fate for their residential recycling system, which underperforms for all materials – recycling only 22% of cardboard from the residential system, 15% of aluminum cans and 14% of PET bottles. All told, Tennessee loses **more than 900,000 tons of residential recyclables a year to landfill and incineration.**



Myth

Expanding recycling will burden the waste industry, making recycling harder.



Fact

Expanded recycling access creates new efficiencies and relies heavily on existing waste haulers and infrastructure.

Additional potential benefits for haulers include expanded collection networks, new routes, and new customers (e.g., multifamily households such as apartments). More recycling means more business and more jobs for the recycling hauling sector.



Myth

EPR will put more costs on consumers.



Fact

Experience and the data in Canada and Europe shows that the impact of packaging fees on producers have non-existent impacts on consumer prices because packaging fees are only one minor factor affecting the market price of packaged goods.

According to a study in June, 2022 by Columbia University in New York: even if on the highest end of estimates of packaging costs doubling, the highest consuming households might see an increase of 0% to 0.69% increase in monthly purchases equaling \$0-4.



Myth

People can recycle now, but the problem is that they don't want to recycle.



Fact

37% of Tennessee residents don't have access to recycling on par with trash.

Over 37% of Tennesseans don't have access to recycling, including 94% of all multifamily residents. The public wants recycling – 84% of consumers expect packages to be recyclable and made from recyclable material. Current education programs are woefully underfunded and smart policy will both close the recycling access gap and help educate residents to boost the collection of materials and increase recycling participation.