

Reimagine Packaging Tennessee

Making the case for Responsibly Structured
Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) in Tennessee...

The Reimagine Packaging Tennessee Coalition



Tennessee Waste Reduction and Recycling Act: TWRRA

**TN Bill # SB0573/HB0550
Senator Heidi Campbell/Rep. Torrey Harris**

Tennessee has a packaging waste problem that has outgrown the capacity to handle it.

Tennessee sends

900,000 tons

of packaging waste to landfills per year

690 pounds

of packaging waste to landfills per TN household per year

Tennessee ranks **48th** in U.S. with a **12%** recycling rate

Only **47%** of TN residents have access to recycling

Only 12 % of recyclable material is recycled in Tennessee

88% of recyclable material is landfilled

Photo Courtesy – Mayor Joe Carr – Rutherford County

**Is this how we
should continue
to deal with solid
waste?**

**“Trash mountain” in
Murfreesboro, TN**



How did we get here?

- Consumer packaging trends over the past 20 years
- E-commerce & pandemic

The recycling infrastructure has not kept up with the growth of flexible packaging

Convenience
Single Serve
On-the-go

Perishables

Case Ready
Meats



— yogurt —



E-commerce has exacerbated waste



Source of packaging waste?

All of this packaging has to go somewhere..



To recycle today's volume of packaging waste a **\$220 million investment** into TN recycling infrastructure is needed



PAYING IT FORWARD Report 2021

- Equitable recycling for every home: **\$80 million**
- Residential recycling solutions for film & flexibles: **\$80 million**
- New or upgraded material recovery facilities: **\$60 million**



Who's responsible?

We all are.

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)
provides a way for us:

- to do what's right
- to clean up our own mess
- to share the responsibility

Lack of funding is the **#1** obstacle
keeping us from expanding recycling

EPR funds the investment to improve recycling



What is Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)?

EPR is the legislation that provides a **sustainable funding source** to improve and expand the existing recycling infrastructure.

Key Facts about EPR...

- Transfers cost of recycling from local governments to the brand, aka. (producer) who's packaging enters Tennessee's waste stream to be recycled.
- Improves overall recycling by diverting valuable material from landfills and expanding recycling to all residents
- Establishes a PRO (a 5013c Producer Responsibility Organization) – “The Heart”
- 4) EPR legislation varies from state to state and country to country.

EPR incentivizes and encourages through *eco-modulation*:

- **Reduction of packaging material**
- **Use of recyclable packaging material**
- **Use of recycled content material**
- **Reusable packaging**

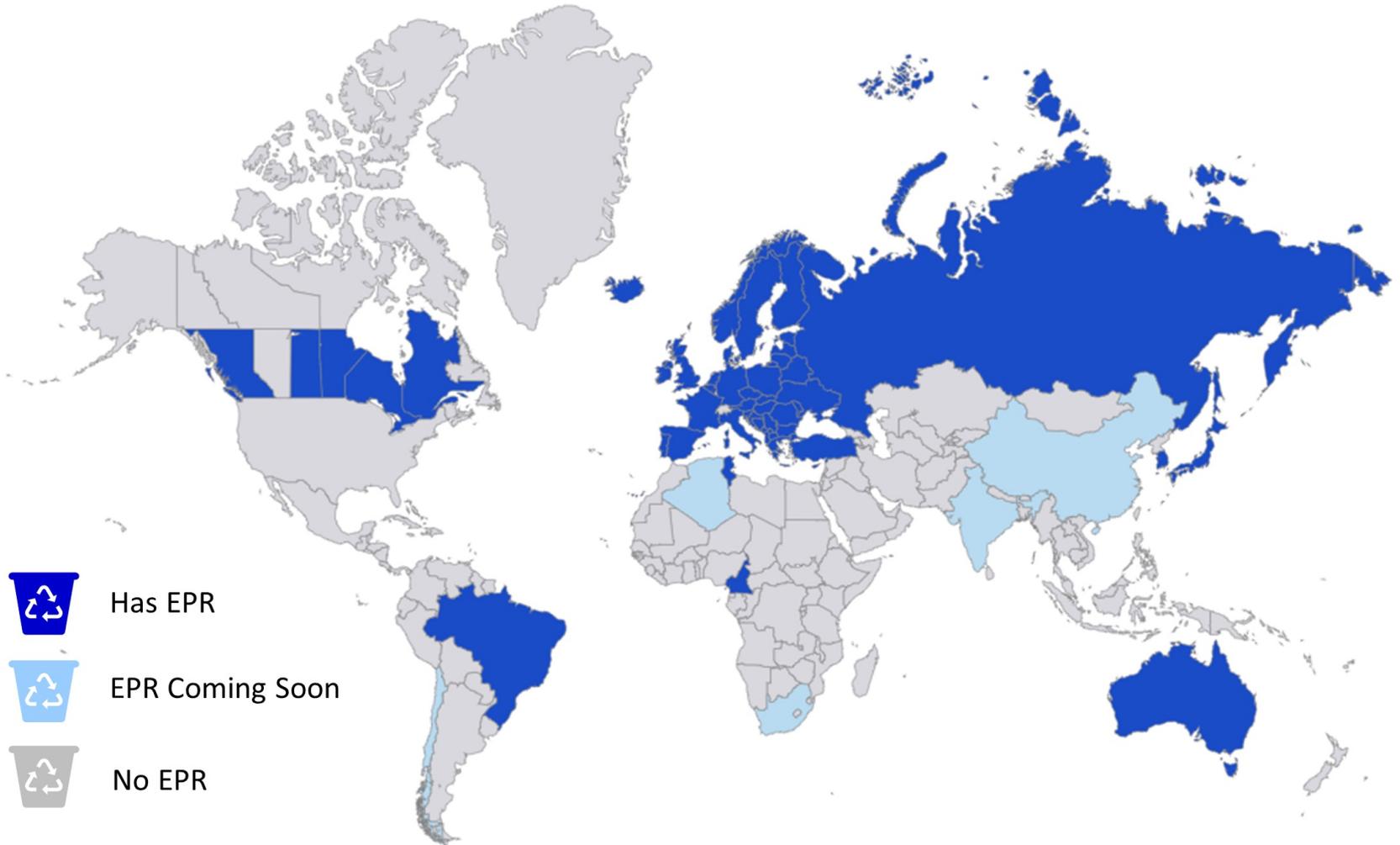
Incentives that reduce Producers overall packaging cost - **the smaller the package the lower the cost**

Studies show no correlation between EPR legislation and increased consumer costs

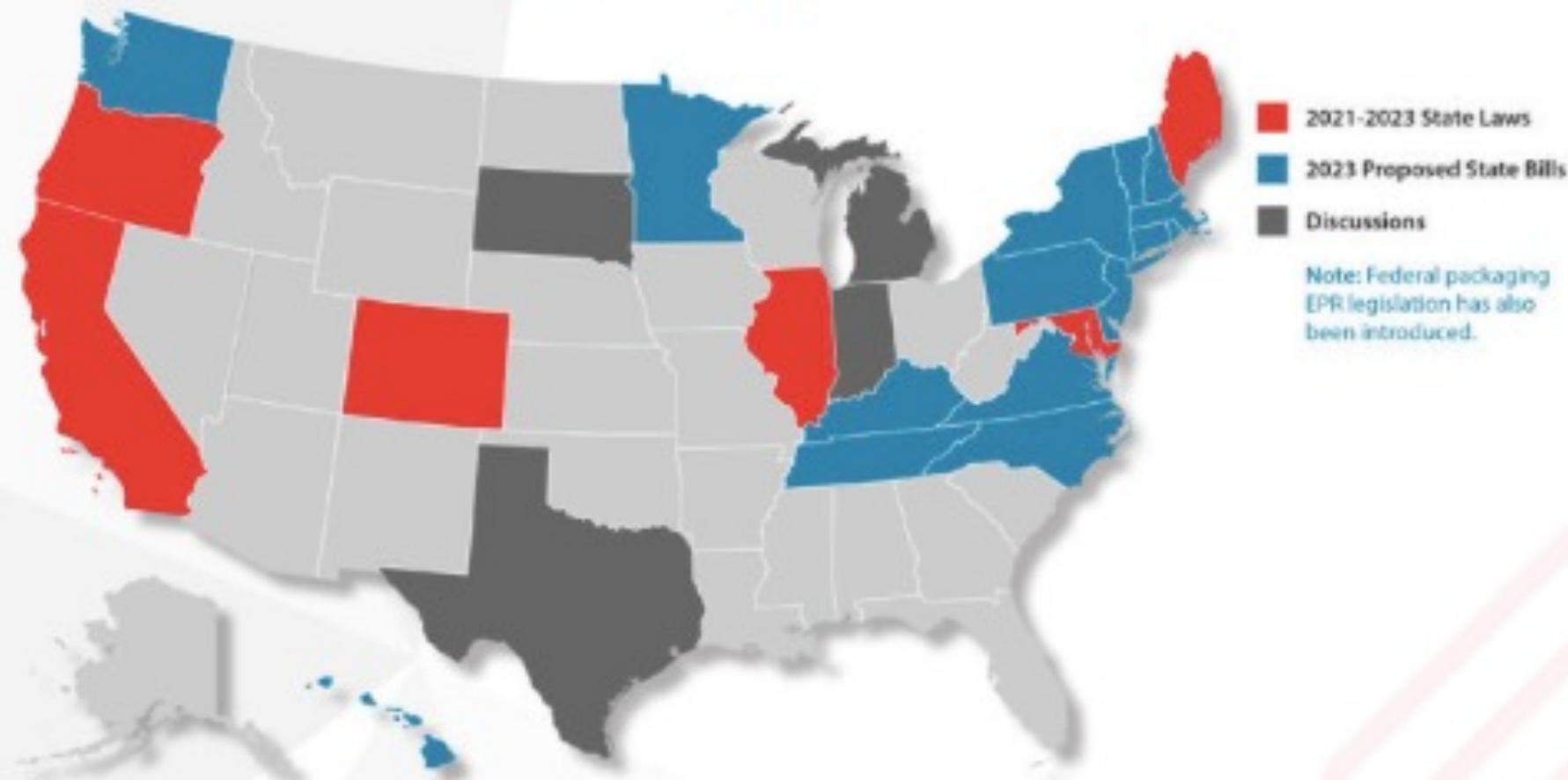
Packaging EPR in the world 2023

The world is realizing that we need a shared \$\$ responsibility

Countries and Provinces with Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging Laws



Do You Know How Many Packaging EPR Laws There Are In The U.S.?



Full Packaging EPR Laws

California – producers obligated 2027

Colorado – producers obligated 2025

Maine – producers obligated 2026

Oregon – producers obligated 2025

Groundwork Packaging EPR Laws *

Illinois – Advisory Council and needs assessment

Maryland – Advisory Council, PRO and needs assessment

* Proposed full packaging EPR legislation did not advance.



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What's a PRO?

A Producer Responsibility Organization is a group of companies brought together to create, implement & manage the EPR plan

The Heart of EPR is The PRO

The PRO is overseen by

Gov.
agency

**(Government agency) oversees
Advisory Board & PRO**

Advisory
Board

Advisory Board oversees PRO

PRO

Conducts state-wide needs assessment of current recycling systems **utilizing existing infrastructure**

Proposes reduction & recycling rate goals and timelines

Contracts with counties and current waste haulers and pays recycling service providers

PRO Responsibilities

Collects annual dues from producers based on amount & type of packaging

Funds recycling education programs

Reports to Advisory Board of key stakeholders and Government Agency

Circular Action Alliance (an established PRO)

Global companies fund EPR around the world and can fund Tennessee



Thank You to Our Founding Members



SFPA Sustainable Food Policy Alliance

- Nestle
- Danone North America
- Mars
- Unilever

“SFPA is broadly supportive of EPR programs around the world and applaud SB 573 which represents a **responsibly structured EPR**”



Tennessee's recycled materials are in demand

“Tennessee has the potential to be the innovation hub of recycled packaging”

- Major packaging company executive

“We need Tennessee's #5 PP containers”

- Major Plastics recycler

“We need recycled glass.”

-Tile manufacturers

“We need our packaging recycled.”

-Major pet care company

“We need more post consumer resin.”

-Major plastic packaging company



One man's trash is Tennessee's treasure