



Tennessee Waste Reduction and Recycling Act (TWRRA)

INCREASE RECYCLING, REDUCE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COSTS

How Local Governments Will Benefit from the Tennessee Waste Reduction and Recycling Act (TWRRA)

Consumers and local governments cannot control the amount and type of packaging they receive; only the producers of the packaging control both. Through the Tennessee Waste Reduction and Recycling Act (TWRRA), which is an Extended Producer Responsibility bill, Tennessee will engage producers and transform its current recycling systems from a disjointed, confusing, and inconvenient patchwork of programs into coordinated, equitable, and cost-effective programs. This will rapidly improve Tennessee's recycling rate and result in stronger local economies, producing more jobs, and most importantly serve as a solution to our shared landfill crisis.

For details on the bill: <https://ReimaginePackagingTennessee.org>.

TWRRA will provide every Tennessean with convenient, easy access to recycling for common packaging materials such as plastic bottles, aluminum cans, glass bottles, and cardboard. This will greatly benefit Tennessee's cities, towns, and counties by:

- Providing recycling to all residents at no cost to residents or local government.
- Expanding recycling to underserved multi-family buildings and rural areas.
- Reducing local government expenses to provide recycling services.
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and plastic pollution.
- Retaining municipalities' right to choose their level of involvement in recycling services.

HOW DOES EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY WORK?

The policy would require brand owners to pay for and manage a statewide recycling system for cardboard, plastic, metal, and other common recyclable packaging. The companies would form an independent nonprofit organization, called a Producer Responsibility Organization (PRO), to coordinate, fund, and manage this statewide recycling system. Companies will pay membership dues to the PRO based on the amount and type of packaging they sell in Tennessee. The PRO will create one consistent statewide list of what can be recycled, and then the PRO will pay private companies and local governments to operate recycling collection and processing programs. The PRO will cover 100% of the costs of recycling packaging, including consumer education and government oversight of the program. The Tennessee Department of Conservation will oversee the PRO and establish an advisory board composed of local governments, recycling companies, nonprofits, and other key stakeholders, to help oversee the program and ensure the PRO meets the needs of local Tennessee communities and businesses.



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EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY IS PROVEN TO HELP TENNESSEE COMMUNITIES

Extended Producer Responsibility has the most successful track record of sustainably financing and expanding recycling programs to reduce landfill waste and litter. Producer Responsibility policies have been used in 40 countries and provinces to improve recycling. Maine, Oregon, California and Colorado adopted the first US Producer Responsibility policies for packaging in the US. Numerous other states are pursuing policies to improve packaging recycling and reduce plastic waste.

TWRRA WILL REDUCE COSTS FOR MUNICIPALITIES AND COUNTIES

Many local governments spend tens to hundreds of thousands of dollars each year to run or support recycling drop-off centers or curbside collection programs. These costs have escalated over the past several years, forcing many communities to raise rates and cut back on services. Through Producer Responsibility, the companies that make these products will pay for the recycling programs, providing substantial cost savings to local governments while maintaining or improving existing services.

TWRRA WILL CREATE A MORE CONVENIENT AND EQUITABLE RECYCLING SYSTEM

Tennessee's current recycling system is fragmented, inequitable, and confusing. Many residents must subscribe to and pay more to have curbside recycling services. This creates substantial inequities as recycling is more available in wealthier communities. There are also very limited recycling services for multi-family properties such as apartments and condos, which make up [19% of Tennessee's housing](#).

Recycling in Tennessee's rural areas is often significantly more expensive, which makes it more challenging to financially sustain these programs. A Producer Responsibility policy will provide convenient and equitable recycling systems across all of Tennessee, from rural to urban areas, including single-family and multifamily homes.

TWRRA PRESERVES FLEXIBILITY AND CHOICE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Recycling in Tennessee is managed primarily at the local level, and cities, towns and counties have a wide range of approaches. TWRRA prioritizes the use of local infrastructure and programs allowing local governments to work with the PRO to create programs that work locally. This program is a funding source for recycling packaging; it will not fund, manage or otherwise interact with trash collection.



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HOW TWRA WILL IMPROVE RECYCLING IN DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES

| Program Type | How the PRO will fund recycling* |
|--|---|
| Local Government provided recycling collection | PRO reimburses municipalities for full costs to provide recycling services for packaging to residents. |
| Local government contracts recycling with private hauler | Municipalities continue to manage local contracts. The PRO pays the full costs of recycling of packaging. |
| Local government operates drop-off center | PRO reimburses the local government for the costs to run the drop-off center for eligible recyclable materials . |
| No local government services | PRO works with the local government to implement a program or pays for recycling collection from households by contracting with private sector companies. |

* Under any of these situations, the local governments have the option of leaving recycling operations to the PRO. Residents will receive recycling service under all these systems at no cost.

TWRRA WILL STRENGTHEN LOCAL ECONOMIES

Increasing recycling in Tennessee will support local economies by increasing the supply of reliable recycled materials for local manufacturers to incorporate into their manufacturing processes. Implementation of an extended producer responsibility program in Tennessee is estimated in the 2023 [50 States of Recycling 2.0](#) report to create 7657 jobs and generate \$73.4 M in additional material value captured.

TWRRA WILL INCREASE RECYCLING

Tennessee’s 2021 recycling rate [ranks 48th](#) in the nation. By recycling more, Tennessee will reduce climate pollution, protect our clean air and water, and create jobs. Tennessee recycles just 34% of cardboard and 4% of plastic bottles.

SUPPORT TWRRA IN TENNESSEE

TWRRA, an Extended Producer Responsibility policy for packaging in Tennessee is a groundbreaking opportunity to transform our recycling system and accelerate progress toward state recycling and climate goals. Learn more about TWRRA and show your support at <https://reimaginePackagingTennessee.org>.