



Natural  
Resources  
Council of  
Maine



Aroostook Waste Systems, by STOOMEY/NRCM

## Maine's EPR for Packaging Law

### EPR Will Reimburse Towns for the Cost of Recycling

In July 2021, Maine became the first state in the nation to pass a law called Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for Packaging that will reduce the cost burden for Maine's municipalities and help them manage recycling programs more effectively.

With programs successfully underway in Europe, Canada, and dozens of other countries, EPR for Packaging is a proven solution that guarantees major benefits for Maine's environment.

### EPR Holds Polluters Accountable

The concept of EPR is simple: instead of relying on communities to deal with costs of managing their wasteful packaging, EPR laws shift the responsibility back onto big, multinational corporations that are responsible for the packaging waste going into Maine's municipal waste stream.

Overseen by a third-party Stewardship Organization, producers will pay fees for packaging they create, and additional fees may be applied to encourage more sustainable packaging design. This money is distributed back to Maine communities to help them pay for their recycling programs and create new recycling infrastructure.

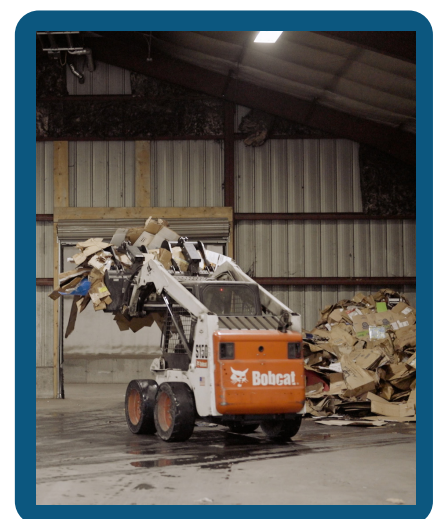
### EPR Reduces Taxpayer Costs for Packaging

Without an EPR for Packaging law, recycling is funded by local property taxpayers, costing Maine taxpayers an estimated \$16-17 million annually in disposal costs. With this law in place, the funding for management of packaging will come from the large producers who bring this material into the state.

Since towns have already spent the funds to manage this packaging, they will be able to use the reimbursements however they wish. Some towns may choose to make improvements to their recycling programs, start new waste diversion programs, or use reimbursements to prevent other increases to property taxes.

### EPR Improves Recycling and Curbs Plastic Pollution

By requiring producers to take responsibility for the true cost of their packaging, companies are encouraged to phase out unnecessary packaging and alter the design of their packaging to make it easier to recycle. Eco-modulated fees will help reduce litter, incentivize use of recycled content, improve disposal labeling, and promote other environmentally responsible design practices.



Aroostook Waste Systems, by STOOMEY/NRCM

(over)

## How Municipalities Can Participate

To participate, a municipality (defined as a city, town, county, township, village, plantation, refuse disposal district, or a regional association) must accept for recycling one or more of the materials that are designated as readily recyclable and must comply with certain data reporting requirements, such as annual reporting of recycling and cost data.

*Beginning in 2026, municipalities who report their costs for recycling of packaging are eligible for reimbursement as soon as October of 2027.*

**"The cost of recycling has skyrocketed... EPR for Packaging is a step in the right direction by asking producers to be part of the solution."**

***The Maine Municipal Association***

## Frequently Asked Questions

### How will the new law impact the price of consumer goods?

EPR for Packaging already exists all over the world, and there is no evidence that it affects consumer prices. Since the cost to companies required to participate typically works out to be fractions of a penny per container, EPR programs have not directly caused increased prices for consumers. We also know from Maine's other product stewardship laws, like the Maine Bottle Bill, that producer responsibility programs don't raise prices.

### How will the law impact local businesses?

The law was specifically crafted to exempt the majority of Maine's small businesses that provide the economic backbone to our cities and towns. It is designed to target large, multinational corporations that are responsible for our waste problems and that already pay for local recycling programs in other places around the world.

### How can towns be more involved in shaping Maine's EPR for Packaging law?

This program was designed to change and evolve as new developments in packaging and recycling technology emerge, which allows municipalities many opportunities to voice their perspectives and help shape the program over time. The initial rulemaking was completed in 2024, but towns can participate in ongoing discussions regarding the readily recyclable designations and other components as needed.

To be kept informed of rulemaking and other public comment periods for EPR, simply email [MainePackagingEPR@maine.gov](mailto:MainePackagingEPR@maine.gov) to be added to their distribution list.

For more information about this law, please visit [nrcm.org/programs/sustainability/ep-for-packaging/](https://nrcm.org/programs/sustainability/ep-for-packaging/)

**Protecting  
the Nature  
of Maine** 



**Natural Resources  
Council of Maine**

3 Wade Street • Augusta, Maine 04330 • 207.622.3101 • [NRCM.org](https://nrcm.org)