



The Renew Act

Renewing Washington's recycling system and reducing waste.



The Problem

Globally, 33 billion pounds of plastic enter the marine environment every year, devastating the world's oceans, ecosystems, and communities. Plastics have been found everywhere we've looked, from the deepest trenches of the ocean and most remote areas of the Washington coast, to the inland rivers in the Pacific Northwest. Our landfills are overflowing and our recycling system isn't functioning as effectively as it could. Sadly, when we buy products, much of the packaging is not recyclable, compostable or reusable. Producers should be responsible for the full life cycle of their products and packaging – right now, this burden falls on residents.

A Revolutionary Solution

In 2021, [SB 5022](#) required higher recycled content in certain types of packaging sold in Washington. This will create end-markets for some plastic resin types, however, a larger, systemic change is needed to modernize our recycling program and end waste.

The RENEW Act, [SB 5697](#), will renew our recycling system and reduce waste. Packaging producers created the problem, they must finance the solution. This bill will:

- Ensure that more plastic and paper packaging will actually get recycled, preventing pollution, and reducing GHG emissions
- Reduce costs and provide universal access to recycling for people across the state
- Improve and expand the system so what comes out of a recycling facility is clean and ready to be made into new products
- Create 1,650+ new green jobs and a strong recycling system with a stable funding source

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Additional Bill details

The RENEW Act will:

- Establish an **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)** system that make producers of packaging and paper products responsible for the full lifecycle of their products
- Incentivize companies to make product packaging more sustainable through establishing a set of graduated fees based on how readily the packaging can be reused, recycled, or composted
- Require that all covered products be reusable, recyclable, or compostable no later than January 1, 2031
- Set recycling and reuse targets that ramp up over time, and ensuring that more plastic, metal, glass and paper packaging will actually get recycled—preventing pollution and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- Increasing Washington’s residential recycling by more than 40%
- Remove recycling confusion through a harmonized list of what can be recycled across the state, and ensure that packaging labels reflect actual recyclability in WA

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