

# Legislative Concept Fact Sheet (LC 578)

## Modernizing Oregon Recycling: A Shared Responsibility Model

### Let's rethink recycling

Recycling has the potential to conserve natural resources and reduce pollution, but Oregon's policy framework for recycling was created more than three decades ago when recycling technologies, economics and what we put in our bins were very different. It's time for an update.

Legislative Concept 578 proposes extensive changes to state policy that will modernize Oregon's recycling system. This system-wide update will create programs that are more resilient to change, optimize environmental benefits and restore public trust.

LC 578 will make recycling easier for the public to use, expand access to recycling services, upgrade the facilities that sort recyclables and create environmental benefits while reducing harms, such as litter. LC 578 will require producers to pay for many of these necessary improvements and help ensure recycling is successful.

### Shared responsibility model

LC 578 requires companies that sell printed paper and packaging into Oregon to share responsibility for the recycling system with local governments, recycling processors and Oregon DEQ. Local governments will maintain local control of collection and customer education, and help improve accessibility and the quality of what is collected. Processors that sort mixed recyclables will meet new performance standards for sorting quality, social equity and responsible recycling. DEQ will provide strong system oversight and coordination, administer new permitting requirements for processors and regulate the producers.

Today, local ratepayers pay for most aspects of Oregon's recycling system. LC 578 requires producers to finance many improvements and share responsibility for making sure materials are recycled in a way that helps the environment without creating unintended consequences.

### The problem: Outdated recycling system

Our recycling system faces many challenges including:

- Public confusion about what and how to recycle.
- Too much non-recyclable trash in collected material.
- Insufficient regulatory oversight of processing facilities.
- Lack of transparency about whether collected material is actually recycled.

- Social inequities throughout the system.
- Market prices that do not account for environmental and social benefits.
- Lack of financial or other involvement by producers and manufacturers.



LC 578 will create a consistent statewide recycling collection list.

### The solutions: What LC 578 does

- **Prohibits misleading labels** on products sold into Oregon.
- Requires **producers to finance system improvements** and avoid additional costs on ratepayers.
- Implements tested education programs that **decrease public confusion** and reduce trash that ends up in recycling bins.
- Creates a **consistent statewide recycling collection list** informed by economic, technical and environmental factors.
- Ensures that materials are **recycled responsibly** – meaning the material we collect is recycled in a way that creates environmental benefits and prevents negative social impacts.
- **Advances equity and improves accessibility** by equalizing the cost of transporting recyclables across the state, expanding collection for multifamily communities, and improving conditions for workers.
- Increases **transparency and accountability** by requiring local governments to send materials to certified facilities, and those facilities to report where they send materials after sorting.
- Incentivizes producers to **design better products and packaging** for the environment.



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*DEQ is a leader in restoring, maintaining and enhancing the quality of Oregon's air, land and water.*

### Why producer involvement is necessary

Producers hold the key to modernizing and sustaining recycling in Oregon. They control and influence many important factors related to the success of recycling, such as how products are designed and labeled, and whether they are made with recycled content. LC 578 protects Oregon's local governments and ratepayers from increased costs, while giving producers the opportunity to improve how their products are recycled or disposed.

### A collaborative approach

LC 578 is the result of a recommendation by Oregon's Recycling Steering Committee, a stakeholder group that DEQ convened from 2018-2020 to address the international recycling markets disruption. The committee, which included members from all parts of the recycling system, worked together to identify what Oregon's future recycling system should look like. The committee reached consensus on a recommended framework in September 2020, which informed the development of this legislative concept.

### How the shared responsibility model works



#### PRODUCERS

Finance system improvements and ensure responsible recycling



#### LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Maintain local control of collection and education



#### COLLECTORS

Work with system partners to improve collection access



#### PROCESSORS

Meet new standards and send material to responsible markets



#### ADVISORY COUNCIL

Advise on important system elements



#### STATE GOVERNMENT

Provide strong oversight, enforcement and permitting

### Learn more

Additional information is available on DEQ's website here: <http://go.usa.gov/x7nZG>. Or contact us by email at: [Abby.Boudouris@deq.state.or.us](mailto:Abby.Boudouris@deq.state.or.us).

### Alternative formats

DEQ can provide documents in an alternate format or in a language other than English upon request. Call DEQ at 800-452-4011 or email [deqinfo@deq.state.or.us](mailto:deqinfo@deq.state.or.us).