

SB 582 is a Very Costly Plan to Restructure Oregon’s Recycling System

SB 582 would require packaging, printing and writing paper be recycled through new “producer responsibility organizations.” These new organizations would be responsible for paying for recycling these products, funding new litter prevention and clean-up programs, paying for facility improvements for multi-family housing recycling, upgrading recycling processing facilities, creating new recycling education programs, reimbursing local governments for some of their transportation costs and operating new depots for the collection of recyclables. If passed, DEQ’s staff and its consultants estimate these new activities will add at least \$100 million more per year to the cost of recycling in Oregon. We support the objective of increasing the recovery of all paper and packaging. However, this bill raises significant policy questions and implementation concerns.

Products Already Being Recycled Would be Moved Into this New System

The bill defines “Covered Products” to include:

1. All types of packaging used to “contain” or “protect” products, including boxes, bags, cans, bottles, take out containers, wrappings, etc.
2. All types of printing and writing papers, including newspapers, magazines, flyers, brochures, catalogs, phone books, copy paper and writing paper.
3. Food service items like paper or plastic plates, including take out containers; and
4. Any other product or material that the Environmental Quality Commission decides to add in the future.

Most of these materials are already being efficiently collected and recycled in Oregon.

Every Oregon Retailer, Wholesaler and Manufacturer Will be Impacted

The “producers” who will be required to pay for the creation and operation of these new programs include anyone who makes, imports, distributes or sells a “covered product.” Every store, restaurant, warehouse, office, publisher, manufacturer, or delivery service will be impacted and required to help pay for these new programs. Ultimately, it will be consumers who will eventually bear much of the burden by paying these costs through higher prices.

Unique Labeling Requirements Will Limit Availability of Some Products

The bill would ban package recycling labels required by many other states, and it would mandate use of a new label to be developed by the EQC by rule. Producers who cannot or do not make products in Oregon specific packages would not be able to sell that product in Oregon.

Huge Penalties Possible

The bill would permit “any person” to sue “any person” for any violations, and allow DEQ to impose penalties of up to \$25,000/day.

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Below are Additional Organizations Opposed to SB 582

