

Expanding Recycling in Oregon

A large, towering pile of plastic waste, including various colored plastic bags and bottles, dominates the center and right side of the image. The background is a clear, bright blue sky. The overall scene suggests a significant volume of plastic waste being managed or recycled.

Taylor Loewen
Caleb Weaver

The Problem

Unclear, outdated state law from the 1980's is preventing Oregonians from accessing recycling opportunities and discouraging waste reduction innovation.

OR has been a leader in government-led efforts to reduce, reuse and recycle, but material recovery rates are not rising in recent years.

Recycling Modernization Act (RMA) will have a big impact - but additional opportunities remain.

Private-sector efforts to expand recycling opportunities often don't fit neatly into current regs, and are hindered by a lack of clarity in state law and exclusive franchise agreements.



The Solution

Small, common-sense updates to state law will achieve the following goals:

- Protect and support existing franchise programs
- Expand access to new recycling opportunities
- Encourage innovation in waste reduction

Proposed Changes

ORS 459A.085(7)(b)

Text addition: Clarify that franchise exclusivity protects the recycling services provided by franchise holder, but does not restrict reuse and recycling services not provided by the franchise.

Impact: Expands opportunities to recycle items not recycled curbside.

ORS 459A.070

Text revision: Reaffirm that exclusive local franchise programs cannot charge more to collect an item for recycling than to send that item to the landfill.

Impact: Affirms the long-established goal of encouraging recycling over landfilling.

Impacts

Clarity

Protect current franchise programs and the services they provide

Establish a clear place for new, innovative, supplemental reuse and recycling opportunities

Access

Ensure Oregonians are not prevented from accessing supplemental waste reduction opportunities

Innovation

Encourage the development of much-needed new ideas to help achieve the state's environmental goals

Support state efforts like the RMA through private sector innovation

Sign in Backrest Program
Made from Recycled Plastic Bags
2021

Questions?

TREX