

EZASSI

Packaging Extended Producer Responsibility (United States)

Regulatory Signals · October 2026

A Regulatory watch on state extended producer responsibility (EPR) laws for packaging: who registers, reports and pays, what it costs, and what packaging must change, read for a food and beverage manufacturer that packs for its own brands and for others across most states. Six signals from one cycle.

#	SIGNAL	CONFIDENCE	HORIZON	STATUS
1	2027 packaging EPR fee schedules for Oregon, Colorado, California and Washington were published on October 1, 2026, the first multi-state fee cycle	High	Immediate (0–3 months)	Verified
2	California's packaging EPR rules are in force, but CAA's program plan and 2027 rates await CalRecycle approval, due by January 1, 2027	High	Immediate (0–3 months)	Verified
3	California's 2032 packaging requirements make EPR a design obligation, not only a fee: 100% recyclable or compostable, 65% recycled and 25% less single-use plastic	High	Long-term (1–3 years)	Verified
4	Maryland's packaging EPR rules took effect June 30, 2026, and its draft producer definition puts a manufacturer licensed to make another company's brand ahead of the brand owner	Medium	Immediate (0–3 months)	Review
5	Maine's packaging EPR program has stalled after no organization bid to run it, so producers have no obligations there until a contract is signed	High	Short-term (3–12 months)	Verified
6	Federal packaging bills advancing in the House cover recycling claims, not EPR fees or reporting, so state EPR remains the rule	Medium	Short-term (3–12 months)	Verified

Every signal rests on two or more dated events. Confidence is published as a band. Where a signal sits below High, the reasoning names the evidence that is missing. Status says where the evidence stands: Verified, Review, or Inconclusive — we looked, and the evidence does not yet support a firmer call.

SIGNAL 1 OF 6

2027 packaging EPR fee schedules for Oregon, Colorado, California and Washington were published on October 1, 2026, the first multi-state fee cycle

HIGH Immediate (0–3 months) · Regulatory Agency Actions · **Verified**

The Circular Action Alliance (CAA), the producer responsibility organization in these states, published 2027 fees on October 1, 2026: Oregon's fee schedule, Colorado's dues, preliminary California rates and Washington's early fees. Producers reported 2025 supply by May 31, 2026, and those reports set what they will be invoiced.

REASONING

Four schedules on one date, built on supply reports filed in May, mark the move from setting up programs to billing producers across several states at once. Oregon has charged fees since July 2025 and Colorado since January 2026, so both are in their second cycle. California's 2027 rates are preliminary and do not bind until CalRecycle approves CAA's program plan.

PATTERN

EPR Atlas, checked against primary sources on October 8, 2026, records 2027 fee schedules published October 1, 2026 for Oregon (program active since July 1, 2025), Colorado (active since January 2026), California (preliminary, non-binding until plan approval, with 2026 early-fee invoices scheduled for the week of August 17, 2026) and Washington (eight per-pound early-fee rates; invoice timing not yet published). Annual supply reports for 2025 were due May 31, 2026 in Oregon, Colorado and California, and interim producer reports in Minnesota, Maryland and Washington on the same date; several of these dates were set by CAA rather than by statute.

IMPLICATION

A manufacturer packing for its own brands and for customers needs to know, state by state, which company is the registered producer for each product, because invoices follow the registered producer's reported tonnage. Any error in the May supply reports will now show up in 2027 invoices.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Within 30 days, pull the October 1 schedules for each state you ship into, map PET, aluminum, film, paperboard and corrugated to their fee categories, and reconcile them against your May 31 supply reports. For each co-manufactured or private-label product, confirm in writing which company is reporting and paying.

SOURCES & WHAT THEY SIGNAL

- [EPR Atlas — US packaging EPR laws by state](#) — Verified against primary sources October 8, 2026: fee schedules published October 1, 2026, reporting dates and program start dates.
- [Circular Action Alliance — California](#) — California program timeline and link to the 2027 fee schedule.

- [Oregon DEQ — Plastic Pollution and Recycling Modernization Act](#) — Program active; rulemaking and plan amendment comments open in October 2026.

SIGNAL 2 OF 6

California's packaging EPR rules are in force, but CAA's program plan and 2027 rates await CalRecycle approval, due by January 1, 2027

HIGH Immediate (0–3 months) · Regulatory Agency Actions · **Verified**

California's SB 54 regulations took effect May 1, 2026. CAA submitted its program plan on June 15, the public comment period closed August 14, and the final draft is due to CalRecycle on October 13, with approval and program start expected on or before January 1, 2027. Until then, the 2027 rates are preliminary.

REASONING

The legal duty to register, report and pay early fees is already in force, while the program fees that follow depend on a plan not yet approved. That gap matters for budgeting and for packaging decisions meant to lower California fees, since the rates and the fee adjustments for material and recyclability are not final.

PATTERN

CalRecycle states the permanent SB 54 regulations became effective May 1, 2026. CAA's California timeline lists the plan submission on June 15, 2026, the close of public comment on August 14, a comment period on the draft funding and services agreement from August 26 to October 24, submission of the final draft plan on October 13, CalRecycle approval and program start on or before January 1, 2027, CAA's first payments to the Plastic Pollution Mitigation Fund on March 1, 2027 and its first administrative fees to CalRecycle on July 1, 2027. EPR Atlas records the 2027 California rates as preliminary until the plan is approved.

IMPLICATION

Registration, reporting and early-fee payment can't wait, but California fee liabilities for 2027 shouldn't be booked as final, and packaging changes justified only by a specific California fee saving should wait for the approved plan.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Assign someone to watch CalRecycle's SB 54 pages for plan approval after October 13. Meanwhile confirm your California registration, check the August early-fee invoice against your 2025 supply report, and budget 2027 California fees as a range.

SOURCES & WHAT THEY SIGNAL

- [CalRecycle — SB 54 packaging EPR](#) — Regulations effective May 1, 2026; CAA plan submitted June 15, 2026; advisory board schedule.
- [CalRecycle — SB 54 regulations](#) — Regulations approved and effective May 1, 2026.
- [Circular Action Alliance — California](#) — Plan timeline through approval on or before January 1, 2027 and first payments in 2027.

- [EPR Atlas — US packaging EPR laws by state](#) — California 2027 rates preliminary and non-binding until plan approval.

SIGNAL 3 OF 6

California's 2032 packaging requirements make EPR a design obligation, not only a fee: 100% recyclable or compostable, 65% recycled and 25% less single-use plastic

HIGH Long-term (1–3 years) · Regulatory Agency Actions · **Verified**

SB 54 requires that by 2032 all single-use packaging and plastic food service ware sold in California be recyclable or compostable, that 65% of single-use plastic packaging be recycled, and that sales of single-use plastic packaging fall 25% from 2023. Expanded polystyrene food service ware is already barred because its recycling target was missed.

REASONING

These targets are statutory and restated by CalRecycle. The expanded polystyrene ban shows the state applying them: when the material missed its 25% recycling rate due January 1, 2025, producers lost the right to sell it in California. Packaging formats that are not recyclable in California face the same risk on a longer clock, and changing a format takes years.

PATTERN

CalRecycle's SB 54 regulations page lists the 2032 requirements: 100% of single-use packaging and single-use plastic food service ware sold in the state recyclable or compostable, 65% of single-use plastic packaging and food service ware recycled, and a 25% reduction from 2023 in single-use plastic packaging sold or distributed. CalRecycle's SB 54 page states the expanded polystyrene recycling requirement due January 1, 2025 was not met, so producers are barred from selling or importing expanded polystyrene food service ware in California. CalRecycle's next update of the covered material categories list, which sets what counts as recyclable, is due by January 1, 2027.

IMPLICATION

Formats such as multilayer flexible film need a recyclability assessment now, because a redesign takes longer than the time left. The covered material categories list, updated at least annually, will show which formats are on track and which carry 2032 risk.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Before the end of 2026, list your packaging formats sold in California, check each against CalRecycle's covered material categories list when it is updated by January 1, 2027, and start redesign work on any format that is not recyclable or compostable in California.

SOURCES & WHAT THEY SIGNAL

- [CalRecycle — SB 54 regulations](#) — 2032 recyclability, recycling-rate and source-reduction requirements.
- [CalRecycle — SB 54 packaging EPR](#) — Expanded polystyrene food service ware barred; covered material categories list update due by January 1, 2027.

SIGNAL 4 OF 6

Maryland's packaging EPR rules took effect June 30, 2026, and its draft producer definition puts a manufacturer licensed to make another company's brand ahead of the brand owner

MEDIUM Immediate (0–3 months) · Regulatory Agency Actions · **Review**

Maryland finalized its packaging EPR regulations on May 15, 2026; they took effect June 30, with producer registration due July 1. In the draft text, the producer of branded packaging is first the manufacturer under its own brand, then a person licensed to make the item under another's brand, and only then the brand owner.

REASONING

The effective date and registration deadline are confirmed. The producer order comes from the draft regulation MDE published for review; whether the final text kept it unchanged has not been confirmed, so the status is Review. If it did, a co-manufacturer operating under a license to make a customer's brand could be the obligated producer in Maryland unless the contract or registration says otherwise.

PATTERN

Maryland's law, SB 901, was signed May 13, 2025. The regulations at COMAR 26.04.14 were finalized May 15, 2026 and took effect June 30, 2026, with producer registration with MDE due July 1, 2026, through CAA or individually. The draft COMAR 26.04.14 defines the producer of packaging, in order, as the item manufacturer where the packaging carries its brand or no brand; then the person licensed to manufacture and sell the item under another manufacturer's brand; then the brand owner; then the importer; then the first distributor into the state. Interim producer reports were due May 31, 2026, and reimbursements to local governments start from July 1, 2028.

IMPLICATION

Whether a contract manufacturer or its customer is the producer in Maryland may depend on how the manufacturing agreement is written. A co-manufacturer that assumes its customers have registered could find it is the obligated party, or that nobody registered the product.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Within 30 days, confirm Maryland registration for your own brands, ask each co-manufacturing and private-label customer whether they registered the products you make for them, and have counsel check your manufacturing agreements against the final COMAR 26.04.14 producer definition.

SOURCES & WHAT THEY SIGNAL

- [Maryland MDE — Draft COMAR 26.04.14, EPR for packaging and paper products](#) — Draft producer definition and its order of obligated parties.
- [Auto Care Association — Maryland packaging EPR takes effect June 30](#) — June 22, 2026: regulations finalized May 15, effective June 30, registration due July 1.

- [EPR Atlas — US packaging EPR laws by state](#) — Maryland interim report and reimbursement dates.

SIGNAL 5 OF 6

Maine's packaging EPR program has stalled after no organization bid to run it, so producers have no obligations there until a contract is signed

HIGH Short-term (3–12 months) • Regulatory Agency Actions • **Verified**

Maine's request for a stewardship organization closed on August 18, 2026 with no proposals, and CAA chose not to bid. Until an organization is under contract, producers have no registration, reporting or fee obligations in Maine, and the expected late-2026 start of registration and invoicing is now uncertain.

REASONING

The stall is confirmed by Maine DEP's announcement and trade reporting. Maine's law and rules are still in place, so obligations return once a contract is signed. DEP has said only that it is assessing its options, with no date.

PATTERN

Maine DEP announced on August 20, 2026 that its request for proposals, which closed August 18, drew no submissions. CAA, which runs packaging EPR in six other states, said the request's scope did not align with its operational practices, systems and data standards, without ruling out a future bid. The program has been at the contracting stage since its final rules were adopted in December 2024. DEP had expected registration and invoicing by the end of 2026 and municipal reimbursements from late 2027; those dates assumed a contract from this round.

IMPLICATION

Maine costs nothing for now, but the obligations will return on short notice once a contract is signed, and Maine's reporting is detailed. Keeping Maine sales data by product avoids a scramble later.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Keep a record of packaging sold into Maine by product, material and weight, and check Maine DEP's EPR page monthly for a new solicitation or contract.

SOURCES & WHAT THEY SIGNAL

- [Resource Recycling — No bidders respond to Maine's EPR RFP](#) — August 20, 2026: no proposals; CAA's reasons; producers have no obligations until a contract is signed.
- [EPR Atlas — US packaging EPR laws by state](#) — Maine: RFP closed August 18, 2026 with no proposals; DEP to reissue, no date.

SIGNAL 6 OF 6

Federal packaging bills advancing in the House cover recycling claims, not EPR fees or reporting, so state EPR remains the rule

MEDIUM Short-term (3–12 months) · Legislative & Statutory Activity · **Verified**

The House Energy and Commerce Committee advanced the PACK Act (H.R. 6832), which would set national standards for recyclable, compostable and reusable claims, and the Recycled Materials Attribution Act (H.R. 7502), which would let companies use mass-balance accounting for recycled-content claims. Neither addresses EPR registration, reporting or fees.

REASONING

The committee action is confirmed by dated trade reporting. Both bills deal with what a package may claim, not with who pays for its collection and recycling, so even if enacted they would leave state EPR programs in place. The band is held at MEDIUM because floor and Senate action are uncertain.

PATTERN

Plastics Today reported on September 16, 2026 that the House Energy and Commerce Committee advanced both bills to the full House. The PACK Act (Packaging and Claims Knowledge Act), introduced in December 2025 by Rep. Randy Weber, would set national standards for recyclable, compostable and reusable claims, with accredited third-party certification and FTC oversight. The Recycled Materials Attribution Act, introduced by Rep. Nick Langworthy, would direct the FTC to revise its Green Guides and allow mass-balance accounting for recycled content. Environmental groups wrote to oppose both bills on September 15, 2026.

IMPLICATION

Waiting for a federal law to simplify state EPR is not a plan. If the PACK Act passes, recyclable and compostable claims on labels would need to meet a federal standard, which may interact with California's recyclability rules, but state registration, reporting and fees would continue.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Keep building state-by-state EPR compliance. Ask your labeling team to track the PACK Act's floor vote, since it would change how recyclable and compostable claims are certified.

SOURCES & WHAT THEY SIGNAL

- [Plastics Today — House committee advances two federal recycling labeling bills](#) — September 16, 2026: both bills advanced; what each would do.
- [NRDC — NGO letter opposing the RMAA and PACK Act](#) — September 15, 2026 opposition letter.

SET UP A SIGNAL ON YOUR QUESTION

A watch on your question runs every cycle.

These signals came from one cycle of a standing watch. Name a company, a market or a regulation, and the watch keeps running whether or not anyone opens the platform. Every signal arrives rated for confidence and horizon, with the dated events behind it and the sources that carry the weight.

See all the samples and tell us your question at ezassi.com/ezassi-signals-sample-library.

info@ezassi.com · ezassi.com