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Packaging Extended Producer Responsibility (United States)

Regulatory Signals · October 2026

A Regulatory signal on US packaging extended producer responsibility: California's program plan and design rules, the 2027 fee schedules in Oregon, Colorado and California, Maine's delayed program and two federal claims bills. Read for a mid-sized packaging manufacturer that converts film, paper and board for food, beverage and consumer goods brands. Five signals from one cycle.

#	SIGNAL	CONFIDENCE	HORIZON	STATUS
1	CAA's revised California packaging plan reached CalRecycle on October 13, 2026, cutting the 2027 budget to about \$1.11 billion; comments close November 13	High	Immediate (0–3 months)	Review
2	2027 will be the first year producers pay packaging EPR fees in three states at once, and CAA's 2027 schedules for Oregon, Colorado and California are posted	Medium	Immediate (0–3 months)	Review
3	California's August 4, 2026 guidance counts plastic source reduction by weight and by number of plastic components, with the first 10% cut due January 1, 2027	High	Short-term (3–12 months)	Review
4	Maine's packaging EPR program is delayed: no stewardship organization bid, DEP is revising its RFP, and no new schedule has been posted	Medium	Short-term (3–12 months)	Review
5	The House Energy and Commerce Committee ordered two packaging claims bills reported on September 16, 2026; neither sets EPR fees or producer reporting	Medium	Short-term (3–12 months)	Review

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 5

CAA's revised California packaging plan reached CalRecycle on October 13, 2026, cutting the 2027 budget to about \$1.11 billion; comments close November 13

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

CalRecycle received Circular Action Alliance's revised California program plan on October 13, 2026. The revised plan cuts the 2027 budget to about \$1.11 billion, from up to \$1.87 billion in the June draft. Public comments run through November 13, 2026, and CalRecycle then has 75 days to decide, which ends around December 27, 2026 by our count. CAA's timeline shows the program starting on or before January 1, 2027.

REASONING

Five dated steps run in one direction, from final regulations to a revised plan under review. The plan sets the budget that 2027 fees are drawn from, so the cut in the revised plan changes the number brand owners will pay and pass on. Status is Review because CalRecycle has not decided, and the end of its 75-day review is our count; CalRecycle gives no end date.

PATTERN

May 1, 2026: the SB 54 regulations, approved by the Office of Administrative Law, became effective on filing. June 15, 2026: CAA submitted its draft program plan. August 14, 2026: comments on the draft closed, with more than 2,400 received. October 13, 2026: CalRecycle received the revised plan, 495 pages. October 14, 2026: Waste Dive reported the 2027 budget at about \$1.11 billion, down from up to \$1.87 billion, and the five-year total at \$7.81 billion to \$13.1 billion, down from \$9.35 billion to \$17.2 billion. November 13, 2026: public comments on the revised plan close. Around December 27, 2026: CalRecycle's 75 days to approve, disapprove, conditionally approve or ask for more information end.

IMPLICATION

Until CalRecycle decides, no 2027 California fee per material is final. Brand-owner customers may be pricing pass-through on the June draft, the posted 2027 schedule or the revised plan, and each gives a different number for the same pack.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Before agreeing 2027 California fee pass-through with any brand customer, ask which fee version it is pricing on: the June draft, the posted 2027 schedule or the revised plan. By November 13, 2026, file comments on the fee-setting and eco-modulation terms that touch the labels, coatings and adhesives you make.

SOURCES & WHAT THEY SIGNAL

- [CalRecycle — SB 54 packaging EPR program page](#) — Receipt of the revised plan, the November 13 comment deadline and the 75-day review.
- [CalRecycle — SB 54 regulations](#) — The regulations took effect on filing on May 1, 2026.
- [Circular Action Alliance — California program page](#) — CAA's California timeline, with program start on or before January 1, 2027.

SIGNAL 2 OF 5

2027 will be the first year producers pay packaging EPR fees in three states at once, and CAA's 2027 schedules for Oregon, Colorado and California are posted

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

Circular Action Alliance has posted 2027 schedules for Oregon producer fees, Colorado dues, and California, where it posted a fee schedule and an incentive mechanism schedule. Oregon fees have applied since July 1, 2025 and Colorado dues since January 1, 2026. California fee obligations start in January 2027, so next year producers pay in all three states.

REASONING

The dated events show two programs already billing and a third about to start. Annual supply reports on 2025 data, due May 31, 2026 in all three states, feed the 2027 numbers. The band is held at Medium because the California schedule was posted before the revised plan of October 13, 2026, which cut the 2027 budget, and the California fees are not final until CalRecycle decides on that plan.

PATTERN

July 1, 2025: Oregon fee obligations started. January 1, 2026: Colorado dues started. May 31, 2026: annual supply reports on calendar year 2025 data were due in Oregon, Colorado and California. June 24, 2026: DLA Piper reported that California annual invoices are expected in early 2027, and that CAA was considering 2026 invoices for pre-program costs. June 30, 2026: CAA remitted its first administrative dues to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. October 13, 2026: CalRecycle received CAA's revised California plan. January 2027: California fee obligations start.

IMPLICATION

A packaging maker is not the producer under these laws, but the fees reach it. Brand-owner customers register, report and pay, and then pass the work down as data requests, specification changes and fee pass-through. Three states billing in the same year means three sets of material categories to report against.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

By the end of December 2026, prepare per-SKU material, component and weight data mapped to CAA's material categories, because brand customers will ask for it before the January 2027 invoices. Check every supply contract for fee pass-through clauses before 2027 price talks.

SOURCES & WHAT THEY SIGNAL

- [Circular Action Alliance — Producer resource center](#) — Fee start dates by state and the May 31, 2026 supply report deadline.
- [Circular Action Alliance — Oregon 2027 producer fees](#) — The posted 2027 Oregon producer fee schedule.
- [Circular Action Alliance — Colorado program page](#) — Colorado dues since January 1, 2026 and the first remittance on June 30, 2026.
- [DLA Piper — California's EPR program plan, June 24, 2026](#) — California annual invoices expected in early 2027.

SIGNAL 3 OF 5

California's August 4, 2026 guidance counts plastic source reduction by weight and by number of plastic components, with the first 10% cut due January 1, 2027

HIGH Short-term (3–12 months) · Regulatory Agency Actions · **Review**

CalRecycle's source reduction reporting guidance, published August 4, 2026, measures plastic source reduction by both weight and number of plastic components against a 2023 baseline. The targets are 10% by January 1, 2027, 20% by 2030 and 25% by 2032, with reuse or refill supplying 2%, 4% and 10% of that by the same dates. By 2032, 65% of single-use plastic packaging must be recycled and all covered single-use packaging must be recyclable or compostable.

REASONING

The targets date from the 2022 law. The news is how they are counted and priced. The August guidance settles the measurement question: components count, not just weight. The June draft plan's fee design then adds penalties from 2028 for components that get in the way of recycling. Status is Review because we have not checked whether the revised plan of October 13, 2026 keeps those fee terms.

PATTERN

June 15, 2026: CAA submitted its draft program plan. Its eco-modulation design adds maluses from 2028 for labels, sleeves, valves, nozzles, coatings and adhesives that are incompatible with recycling, starting at 10% of the base fee and rising to 100%, with penalties for hazardous and toxic additives by 2029 (DLA Piper, June 24, 2026). July 17, 2026: CalRecycle published the first version of its source reduction reporting guidance. August 4, 2026: CalRecycle published the updated guidance. January 1, 2027: the first source reduction target, 10%, applies.

IMPLICATION

Because plastic components are counted, brand customers will push for fewer of them: separate closures, liners and labels. Under the June draft plan, they will also push from 2028 against labels, coatings and adhesives that are incompatible with recycling. Converters with mono-material or fewer-component options will be asked for them first.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

By the end of Q1 2027, list which of your label, coating and adhesive systems pass California's recyclability determinations on the covered material categories list, whose next update is due January 1, 2027. Prepare mono-material or fewer-component alternatives for customer packaging reviews.

SOURCES & WHAT THEY SIGNAL

- [CalRecycle — Producer guidance](#) — The source reduction reporting guidance published August 4, 2026.
- [CalRecycle — SB 54 regulations](#) — The source reduction, recycling and recyclability targets.
- [DLA Piper — California's EPR program plan, June 24, 2026](#) — The draft plan's maluses for incompatible components and additives.
- [CalRecycle — Covered material categories list](#) — Which material categories CalRecycle treats as recyclable, updated at least annually.

SIGNAL 4 OF 5

Maine's packaging EPR program is delayed: no stewardship organization bid, DEP is revising its RFP, and no new schedule has been posted

MEDIUM Short-term (3–12 months) · Regulatory Agency Actions · **Review**

Maine DEP issued its request for proposals for a stewardship organization on June 15, 2026 and received no proposals by the August 20 deadline. On September 11, 2026, DEP said it will revise the request. As of October 21, 2026, no revised request or schedule has been posted.

REASONING

Three dated agency steps show a delay, not a halt: the request, the empty deadline and the decision to revise. The law and DEP's annual calendar are still in place. The band is Medium because nothing in the sources sets a new date, and Pierce Atwood, a law firm, expects lawmakers to discuss amendments in the next session.

PATTERN

June 15, 2026: Maine DEP issued the request for proposals. August 20, 2026: the deadline closed with no proposals. September 11, 2026: DEP said it will revise the request. September 14, 2026: the National Law Review published Pierce Atwood's report that CAA did not bid. September 22, 2026: Packaging Digest reported that CAA cited Maine's municipal reimbursement model and data requirements. October 21, 2026: no revised request or schedule posted. Once DEP signs a contract, registration opens and producers then have 90 days to register. DEP's calendar lists producer reporting on May 31, invoicing on July 1 and payment on September 1.

IMPLICATION

No Maine fees are due before a contract. When registration opens, brand-owner customers will need brand-, UPC-, material- and weight-level data quickly. Exemptions cover producers under \$2 million in gross revenue for the first three years after the contract and under \$5 million after that, those placing under 1 ton of packaging into Maine, and the first 15 tons of perishable-food packaging.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Over the next six months, keep packaging specification data mappable to Maine by brand, UPC, material and weight, so you can answer customer requests inside the 90-day registration window once DEP signs a contract.

SOURCES & WHAT THEY SIGNAL

- [Maine Department of Environmental Protection — Stewardship Program for Packaging](#) — No proposals by August 20, the plan to revise the request, the calendar and the exemptions.
- [Maine Department of Environmental Protection — Stewardship Program for Packaging resources](#) — Program documents with no stewardship organization selected.
- [National Law Review — Maine Packaging EPR Program Faces New Uncertainty After DEP Receives No Bids, September 14, 2026](#) — CAA did not bid; DEP will revise the request.

SIGNAL 5 OF 5

The House Energy and Commerce Committee ordered two packaging claims bills reported on September 16, 2026; neither sets EPR fees or producer reporting

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

The PACK Act, H.R. 6832, introduced by Rep. Weber in December 2025, was ordered reported by the full Energy and Commerce Committee on September 16, 2026. The committee also advanced the Recycled Materials Attribution Act, from Rep. Langworthy, which would direct the FTC to revise the Green Guides to allow mass balance accounting. As of September 30, 2026, there was no notable federal action on packaging EPR and no federal framework ready.

REASONING

Two dated committee actions show Congress moving on packaging claims, not on EPR. The bills cover what can be printed on a pack about recyclability, compostability and recycled content. Neither sets fees, producer reporting or covered-material lists, so state programs stay in place. The band is Medium because neither bill has a floor vote scheduled.

PATTERN

December 2025: the PACK Act, H.R. 6832, was introduced. September 1, 2026: the subcommittee advanced it (Packaging Digest, September 4, 2026). September 16, 2026: the full Energy and Commerce Committee ordered it reported and also advanced the Recycled Materials Attribution Act (PlasticsToday, September 16, 2026). September 30, 2026: Packaging Dive reported no notable federal action on packaging EPR and no federal framework ready. Packaging Digest says the PACK Act would replace conflicting state requirements on recyclable and compostable claims.

IMPLICATION

These bills touch the recyclable and compostable claims a packaging maker prints for its customers. They do not touch EPR fees or the data requests that come with them. State EPR work continues regardless of what happens in Congress.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Keep state EPR data work on schedule. Ask customers to hold artwork changes to recyclability claims until the PACK Act's floor and Senate path is clear, and review that path again at the end of Q1 2027.

SOURCES & WHAT THEY SIGNAL

- [Packaging Dive — federal EPR packaging push, September 30, 2026](#) — No notable federal action on packaging EPR and no federal framework ready.

SET UP A SIGNAL ON YOUR QUESTION

Your question, checked every cycle.

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