

Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging (EPR) in Maine



2026 marks the start of implementation for Maine's EPR for packaging law: legislation to help offset municipalities' recycling costs and incentivize more sustainable packaging. Find out what it means for your community.

What is EPR for Packaging?

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is a policy approach that assigns manufacturers and brand owners greater responsibility for the entire lifecycle of their product packaging. EPR helps shift recycling costs toward producers, reducing the burden on consumers and municipalities.

Benefits for Maine municipalities:

- **Lowers the burden for taxpayers.**
 - Reimbursements provide towns with relief for the cost of recycling.
- **Increased access to recycling.**
 - This support can help communities improve recycling infrastructure.

Benefits for all consumers:

- **Incentivizes packaging innovation.**
 - Producers will benefit from reducing unnecessary packaging and leveraging more readily recyclable materials.
- **Restore consumer choice.**
 - More producers opting for lower-waste packaging means more sustainable options on the shelves.

How does the Program Work?

PRODUCERS PAY

Big companies are assessed fees based on the tons of packaging they introduce into Maine's waste stream.



PEOPLE RECYCLE

Methods of recycling don't change under EPR - residents should continue to recycle as they normally do.



COMMUNITIES REPORT

Municipalities record expenses related to recycling and report to the Stewardship Organization (S.O.).



REIMBURSEMENTS ISSUED

Beginning in the fall of 2027, participating municipalities will receive reimbursement for eligible recycling costs at a rate determined by the Stewardship Organization (S.O.).

Participating in EPR: Guidance for Municipalities

To participate in Maine's EPR for Packaging program, a municipality must accept for recycling at least one of the designated readily recyclable materials, and must submit annual reporting on their recycling tonnage and costs.

The Stewardship Organization (S.O.) will conduct studies to determine reimbursement rates. The median cost per ton of managing eligible packaging will be determined based on groupings of similar municipalities (defined by location and population).

ANTICIPATED PROGRAM DATES

JANUARY 2026 Municipalities begin recording eligible expenses

SPRING 2026 Maine DEP selects a Stewardship Organization (S.O.)

SPRING 2027 First municipal annual reporting due

FALL 2027 First reimbursements issued

Once selected, the S.O. will provide participating municipalities with tools, guidance, and detailed reporting requirements.

Reportable Expenses: What to Know

While awaiting detailed reporting guidance from the S.O., municipalities should ensure that they are recording recycling expenses in detail. The S.O. will provide detailed guidance and reporting tools; until then, maintain detailed records of all costs and revenues related to recycling.

Reportable expenses may include:

Labor

Tipping & Hauling Fees

Equipment

Storage & Structures

Energy Costs

Recycling Education & Outreach

Only **recycling-related expenses** will be eligible for reimbursements. Municipalities should be prepared to account in detail for proportions of shared expenses that are related to recycling.

Next Steps for Municipalities

CONTACT the Maine DEP at **MainePackagingEPR@maine.gov** if you have questions or to express interest in participating in the program.

DOWNLOAD the Natural Resources Council of Maine (NRCM)'S preliminary checklist of costs to record. Find it at **NRCM.org** or find a link at ecomaine.org/epr.



ecomaine.org/EPR

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*All information is subject to change as this program is implemented and refined.
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