

Colorado Environmental and Non-Profit Organizations support HB2-1355 Producer Responsibility

April 26, 2022

Dear Legislators,

We, as Colorado environmental and non-profit organizations, are writing to ask for your support to help pass HB22-1355, Producer Responsibility that will transform recycling in Colorado.

HB22-1355 works by shifting the costs of recycling from taxpayers and local governments and onto consumer brands as part of the cost of doing business. Over 40 countries have Producer Responsibility policies for containers and packaging materials, and Maine and Oregon adopted the first US policies in 2021. Colorado's Producer Responsibility program for paint has successfully increased paint recycling and saved municipalities tens of thousands of dollars per year since its implementation in 2015.

HB22-1355 will create an industry-led, nonprofit Producer Responsibility Organization (PRO) that will collect dues from consumer goods producers based on the amount and type of packaging sold in Colorado. These dues will create a steady funding mechanism to pay for and optimize recycling systems for all residents and businesses across Colorado, thereby increasing equity and access to services, improving Colorado's dismal recycling rate, and creating more jobs and feedstocks for remanufacturing.

The environmental benefits of HB22-1355 include:

PROMOTING ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE BY PROVIDING FREE, CONVENIENT RECYCLING SERVICES TO COLORADO RESIDENTS WHO HAVE BEEN LEFT OUT.

Coloradans living in multi-family households and rural regions of Colorado have significantly lower access to recycling than single-family residents and people in the Front Range. Almost 60% of multifamily households do not have convenient access to recycling services. A Producer Responsibility law in Colorado will prioritize equitable and convenient recycling access for all residents and businesses across the state without requiring municipalities to bear the financial burden of providing services. In fact, this program could save the taxpayers in some municipalities tens of thousands of dollars that they currently pay to fund curbside and drop-off recycling programs.

REDUCING GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS BY BOOSTING THE STATE RECYCLING RATE.

Improving recycling systems through Producer Responsibility is an effective way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. For example, for every one ton of material recycled, three tons of climate pollution is avoided. Diverting recyclables from landfills reduces the generation of

methane, a powerful greenhouse gas. Reducing methane emissions has become a top priority of the IPCC to slow the effects of climate change. Recycling also uses less energy and water compared to using virgin materials.

REDUCING PLASTIC POLLUTION BY IMPROVING RECYCLING COLLECTION SYSTEMS.

A Producer Responsibility policy would also reduce the amount of plastic litter that breaks down into dust-like microplastics, harming human health, wildlife, water systems, and soils. Since producers will be charged dues based on the volume and type of materials they use in packaging, they will be incentivized to reduce the overall amount of packaging, eliminate the use of toxic substances in packaging, and choose environmentally preferable materials.

Colorado's statewide recycling rate is around 15%, which is less than half the national average. There is a tremendous opportunity for Colorado to rapidly improve our recycling systems, provide free, convenient recycling to all Coloradans, bolster our local supply chain with recycled materials, create new green jobs, and become a model for other states to follow.

Colorado residents are tired of unnecessary packaging and want producers to be more involved in the recycling process. **HB22-1355 Producer Responsibility is a proven policy that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, create green jobs, reduce municipal costs, and bring equitable recycling access across Colorado.** With your support for HB22-1355, Colorado will become a leader, rather than a laggard, in optimizing local recycling systems.

Sincerely,

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