

Oregon: An EPR Pioneer

Oregon's groundbreaking Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) law for packaging is setting a new standard for sustainability and waste management. As one of the first states in the U.S. to require producers to fund the recycling and disposal of their packaging, this law aims to reduce packaging waste, improve recycling rates, and hold producers accountable for the lifecycle of their products.

Policy Objectives

The policy focuses on reducing waste, enhancing recycling infrastructure, and holding producers accountable for the environmental impacts of their packaging.

- 🍃 **Achieve a 75% reduction in packaging waste by 2030**
- 🍃 **Increase Oregon's packaging recycling rate to 65% by 2025 and 70% by 2030.**
- 🍃 **Ensure that 100% of Oregon residents have access to recycling services, particularly those in rural or underserved areas**



How It Works

Oregon's Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) law, set to take full effect in 2025, is a pivotal step toward reducing packaging waste and improving recycling rates across the state. The EPR system in Oregon operates through a collaborative structure involving producers, recyclers, and the state. Producers are required to pay into a recycling fund based on the environmental impact of their packaging, with fees varying depending on material types and recyclability. This fund is used to support recycling infrastructure and the collection of packaging waste across the state. To further encourage sustainability, the law also includes a bonus discount system that rewards producers for adopting sustainable practices, such as reducing packaging waste, using recyclable materials, or incorporating recycled content into their products. This approach not only helps to reduce the environmental footprint of packaging but also promotes innovation in packaging design, creating a more circular economy.

The Role of Life Cycle Assessments

Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) plays a crucial role in Oregon's Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) policy by providing a comprehensive tool for evaluating the environmental impact of packaging. LCA is critical for identifying sustainable design strategies that maximize impact reductions while meeting performance and cost requirements.

Fee Calculation: LCA helps determine the environmental impact of various packaging materials by assessing factors like raw material extraction, manufacturing processes, transportation, use, and end-of-life disposal. Producers pay fees based on the environmental impact of their packaging, and LCA provides data to ensure that the fees are accurately aligned with the sustainability of the materials used.

Bonus Discount System: Oregon's eco-modulation system is grounded in data-driven Lifecycle Assessment (LCA). To qualify for fee reductions under Bonuses A, B, and C, producers must validate their claims with a 3rd-party reviewed LCA. Bonus A rewards disclosure of packaging impacts, Bonus B offers larger incentives for making packaging improvements that lead to significant impact reductions, and Bonus C rewards switching from single-use to reusable and refillable systems.

Transparency and Accountability: LCA provides transparency in evaluating the true environmental cost of packaging materials, enabling producers to make data-driven decisions that comply with EPR regulations and align with sustainability goals. It also ensures accountability in reporting the sustainability efforts of packaging producers, fostering trust with consumers and regulatory bodies.

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Ways Brands Can Prepare

As we approach the full implementation of Oregon's Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) law in 2025, brand preparedness is more critical than ever. Companies should be finalizing their packaging registration, optimizing designs for sustainability, and ensuring they are fully aligned with Oregon's fee structure and bonus discount system:

Q1 2025 (January - March)

Finalize Packaging

Registration: Ensure that packaging registration is complete with Oregon's EPR system, including all relevant data on materials, recyclability, and environmental impact.

Evaluate Portfolio: Identify eco-modulation opportunities and SKUs to report on in 2026. Trayak offers eco-modulation consulting assessment to help ensure you make the most strategic choices.

Q2 2025 (April - June)

Begin Fee Payments:

Producers will begin paying fees based on their packaging's environmental impact. It is crucial to ensure the payment process is set up with Oregon's recycling fund.

Monitor Packaging

Performance: Track and evaluate the real-world impact of your new sustainable packaging to ensure it meets both cost and environmental goals.

Q3 2025 (July - September)

Full EPR Enforcement:

Oregon's EPR system fully enforces fees and regulations. Producers are expected to pay into the recycling fund based on their compliance and the sustainability of their packaging materials.

Adjust Strategies as

Needed: Review the first few months of implementation and adjust packaging and operational strategies to improve efficiency, reduce costs, or qualify for incentives.

Q4 2025 (October - December)

Ongoing Monitoring and Reporting:

Brands should continue to monitor and report packaging data annually. Stay updated on any changes in Oregon's EPR law or new opportunities for optimization and cost savings.

Prepare for Future

Regulatory Changes: Keep an eye on upcoming updates to Oregon's EPR law and potential future regulations that could affect packaging materials or producer responsibilities.

OSC Member Spotlight: Trayak



For over 15 years, Trayak has been a leader in packaging sustainability and analytics, equipping brands with expertise and intuitive solutions for Life Cycle Assessment (LCA), EPR compliance and eco-modulation, carbon accounting, and sustainability goal management. "While navigating the first wave of EPR deadlines, many producers have been viewing eco-modulation as an afterthought. By shifting that mentality and planning ahead, companies can turn the sustainability initiatives they're already working towards into real value through Oregon's new incentive structures," says *Trayak Sustainability Analyst Manager, Nathan McKee*.

Eco-modulation can reward companies that invest in sustainability but many producers are unsure how to best leverage these opportunities. SKU selection and strategic planning is critical for optimizing bonuses. Producers must weigh factors like the amount of base fees for each SKU, the potential for impact reduction of packaging improvements, and timeline to implement changes. Packaging changes that can be released quickly may be better candidates now, while complex redesigns can be saved for future cycles. SKUs with lower base fees may still be good candidates if they lead to significant impact reductions.

Professional expertise is required to validate eco-modulation claims. Producers must submit 3rd-party reviewed LCAs that follow strict guidelines including methodology requirements, environmental indicators to include, and documentation that go far beyond a quick analysis. Trayak provides leading EPR compliance and eco-modulation solutions through our Ecolmpact sustainability platform and expert consulting services. Our team guides you through every step of the process, from evaluating your product portfolio and identifying the right SKUs, to building compliant reports and 3rd-party review.

Trayak helps producers establish successful, long-term systems for EPR reporting through strong data collection and reporting processes with its unique blend of software, automation, and hands-on expertise. More information [here](#).

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