



Formal Statement on Federal Proposal

July 18, 2019

The time for a comprehensive solution for plastic and packaging problems in the U.S. is long overdue. Failure to place responsibility on producers through effective extended producer responsibility (EPR) legislation has left many local governments and taxpayers in a difficult bind across the U.S., with many communities shuttering their recycling programs over the past year or facing deficits. State and local governments have made packaging a priority because their communities are hurting. They need solutions. EPR is the only transformational solution to the current crisis. Voluntary efforts chip away at the margins but will not change the situation in any fundamental way. If we don't act now, the problem will only worsen.

EPR shifts the burden from governments and taxpayers to producers, who decide what materials to put on the market. We are pleased to see Senator Udall and Representative Lowenthal putting EPR forward as part of a comprehensive solution. In other nations, EPR has been a success story, one that has raised recycling rates significantly, while recycling in the U.S. has been stagnant for nearly two decades.

The federal legislative proposal has elevated the plastics and packaging recycling crisis experienced by local governments across the U.S. to the national stage. The restrictions on recycling exports to China and other countries, coupled with the growing awareness of plastics pollution has ignited packaging EPR action in at least nine states (CA, OR, WA, NY, VT, ME, CT, MA, and IN), numerous state and local initiatives targeting plastic and paper bags, government actions on other single-use plastics (polystyrene, bottles, straws, etc.), and renewed interest in bottle bills.

Since the Product Stewardship Institute has membership from 47 state agencies and hundreds of local governments, we support local authority to protect citizen health and the environment. For this reason, we were pleased that the legislative proposal would also protect local governments by penalizing states that prohibit local authorities from enacting plastic reduction policies. PSI's [policy statement](#) outlines our view on the topic of state preemption.

We look forward to contributing to the draft proposal to ensure that the American public's interests – for a clean and safe environment and an effective system that doesn't unfairly burden taxpayers – are strongly represented.