

# just zero Ten Requirements for Effective Packaging Reduction Policies



Your Checklist for an effective packaging policy that will **REDUCE POLLUTION** and **HOLD POLLUTERS ACCOUNTABLE!**



- 1 Establish Environmental Standards for Packaging**

Similar to fuel efficiency standards for cars and appliances, we need environmental standards for packaging: 50% reduction in packaging over ten years—achieved either through elimination or by switching to reuse/refill systems— and the rest must achieve a 70% recycling rate. Waste reduction comes before recycling in every waste hierarchy and will only be achieved if it is required. Plastics recycling is a failure and we cannot rely on recycling to solve our plastics problem.
- 2 Reduce Toxics in Packaging**

Packaging that contains toxic chemicals is harmful to human health and the environment and can make it unsafe to use recycled materials in future products. Known toxic chemicals and substances, such as PFAS, formaldehyde, mercury, and lead should be removed from packaging.
- 3 No False Recycling**

Whether it's called "chemical recycling" or "advanced recycling", the technologies all emit hazardous waste, are mostly waste-to-fuel, and are often placed in low-income communities and communities of color. The last thing we need is to create more fossil fuels or to waste taxpayer dollars and valuable time on false solutions. These technologies should not be considered recycling—the definitions in any policy must make that clear.
- 4 Include a Modernized Beverage Deposit Law, a.k.a Bottle Bill**

Bottle Bills work – deposit return laws are the best example of EPR and the most effective way to handle beverage containers. Most beverage containers should be managed by a modernized deposit law that sets the minimum deposit at ten cents, promotes refillable containers, has minimum reuse and recycling targets, and makes it easy for people to return their containers. Ten states already have a Bottle Bill.
- 5 Provide Financial Relief to Taxpayers and Consumers**

Packaging companies should pay fees that are used to: reimburse municipalities and consumers for the cost of recycling packaging material; provide new funding for projects that reduce packaging waste and improve recycling; and fund state agencies for managing the program and enforcing the law. Companies should pay no fees for packaging used in reuse + refill systems.
- 6 Include Both Residential and Commercial Waste**

Commercial waste makes up between 40% and 60% of the waste stream. The policy should apply to packaging generated in all sectors.
- 7 Don't Put the Packaging Industry in Charge**

We would not expect the tobacco industry to implement effective anti-smoking efforts—do not allow consumer brands to self-regulate through Producer Responsibility Organizations (PROs). There needs to be binding performance targets set in statute, and strong accountability and oversight by state agencies, including the ability to completely disband poor-performing PROs.
- 8 Ensure Strong Oversight and Accountability**

A law is only as strong as its enforcement. Create a new Office of Inspector General specifically to enforce the program and make sure state agencies receive the funding necessary to implement and enforce the law.
- 9 Avoid Glaring Loopholes**

Make sure the bill language does not allow packaging producers to wiggle out of compliance. For instance, Section 42060(3)(A) of the California EPR law exempts "single-use material that presents unique challenges in complying." This provision alone could make the California EPR law ineffective.
- 10 Seek Transparency and Inclusion in the Process**

Do not negotiate this complex and important policy behind closed doors. Hold public hearings and roundtables. Invite ordinary citizens into the process. Hear all sides and then decide what is best for the people and the environment.

January 2023