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## **Colorado Legislature Passes Landmark EPR Bill for Packaging and Paper**

**Denver, CO** — As of yesterday, Colorado is poised to become the third U.S. state – and the first this year – to pass a comprehensive Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) law that will significantly increase paper and packaging recycling. Spearheaded by Representative Lisa Cutter and Senators Julie Gonzales and Kevin Priola with support from Recycle Colorado, the Producer Responsibility Program for Recycling bill (HB22-1355) passed both the House and Senate and has been sent to Governor Jared Polis. This bill represents a paradigm shift in the way paper and packaging are designed and managed in the United States.

“We worked for two decades with governments and producers to develop our packaging EPR policy model, which we provided to Recycle Colorado to support the drafting of this bill,” said Scott Cassel, CEO and Founder of the Product Stewardship Institute. “It will serve as an example to other states for years to come.”

Colorado’s combined recycling and composting rate is just 15%, less than half the national recycling and composting rate. The new law will make a significant impact: Over 40 countries and provinces around the world have tracked two decades of success with similar EPR programs – resulting in packaging recycling rates as high as 80%.

“This policy will make it easy for all Coloradans to recycle more plastics, aluminum cans, glass bottles, cardboard, and printed paper. It will also help manufacturers and businesses by creating a more resilient domestic supply of recycled materials to make new products. Amid historic supply chain disruptions, rampant climate change, and pervasive plastic pollution, there has never been a more important time to invest in recycling,” said Kate Bailey, Policy Director at Eco-Cycle and lead author of the bill.

Recycle Colorado was instrumental in engaging stakeholders to develop and pass the legislation, holding over 70 meetings with both in-state and national representatives from all sectors of industry, government, and nonprofits. The bill puts responsibility for managing and educating consumers about packaging and paper waste on those who decide which materials to use in the first place – namely, consumer brands. It also creates strong financial incentives for brands to use less packaging and paper overall (and to choose more sustainable options) and increases access to recycling across the state. And it achieves all of this without increasing consumer prices or incurring costs to local governments.

“People believe we have a green state and are shocked to hear how low our diversion rates are,” said State Representative Lisa Cutter, one of the sponsors of HB22-1355. “This bill will protect our climate, create an easier and more consistent system of recycling throughout the state, and contribute to creating a circular economy. We've been laggards in this area, and this gives us the opportunity to be leaders.”

Unlike Maine and Oregon’s packaging EPR laws, both passed last year, Colorado’s program would be fully funded and managed by producers – typically, consumer brands. If signed into law, the bill will represent a distinctly different approach for using EPR to manage packaging and paper products in the U.S.

“The Product Stewardship Institute’s expertise and its coalition – a working group of government partners – was instrumental in developing this policy,” said Bailey. “We were able to work through details and changes with stakeholders, and to build legislative support for this bold vision. Eco-Cycle worked together with PSI to pass our paint stewardship law in 2015, and that policy has resulted in tremendous cost savings to local governments and greatly increased paint recycling across the state. EPR is a proven policy solution, and we look forward to working with PSI and other partners to transform the landscape of recycling across the US.”

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### **About the Product Stewardship Institute (PSI)**

The Product Stewardship Institute is a policy advocate and consulting nonprofit that powers the emerging circular economy to ensure products are responsibly managed from design to end of life. In 2000, PSI pioneered product stewardship in the United States by convening diverse stakeholders to build extended producer responsibility (EPR) policies, programs, and laws. Together, we advance scalable solutions that protect people and the planet. Join us at [www.productstewardship.us](http://www.productstewardship.us).

### **About Eco-Cycle**

Eco-Cycle started recycling in Colorado in 1976, and today employs over 65 staff and recycles over 60,000 tons of materials each year, making it one of the nation’s oldest and largest nonprofit recyclers and a Zero Waste pioneer. Eco-Cycle innovates, implements, and advocates for local and global Zero Waste solutions to foster a more regenerative, equitable, and climate-resilient future. For more information: [www.ecocycle.org](http://www.ecocycle.org).

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