

Chapter 70A.520 RCW
PLASTIC PACKAGING—EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

Sections

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RCW 70A.520.010 Findings—Intent. (Expires July 1, 2029.) (1)

The legislature finds that:

(a) Convenient and environmentally sound product stewardship programs that include collecting, transporting, and reuse, recycling, or the proper end-of-life management of unwanted products help protect Washington's environment and the health of state residents;

(b) Unwanted products should be managed where priority is placed on prevention, waste reduction, source reduction, recycling, and reuse over energy recovery and landfill disposal; and

(c) Producers of plastic packaging should consider the design and management of their packaging in a manner that ensures minimal environmental impact. Producers of plastic packaging should be involved from design concept to end-of-life management to incentivize innovation and research to minimize environmental impacts.

(2) Additionally, the legislature finds that, through design and innovation, industry should strive to achieve the goals of recycling one hundred percent of packaging, using at least twenty percent postconsumer recycled content in packaging, and reducing plastic packaging when possible to optimize the use to meet the need.

(3) The legislature intends that the department, through a consultative process with industry and consumer interest, develop options to reduce plastic packaging in the waste stream for implementation by January 1, 2022. [2019 c 460 s 1. Formerly RCW 70.380.010.]

RCW 70A.520.020 Definitions. (Expires July 1, 2029.) The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Brand" means a name, symbol, word, or mark that identifies a product, rather than its components, and attributes the covered product to the owner of the brand as the producer.

(2) "Department" means the department of ecology.

(3) "Producer" means a person who has legal ownership of the brand, brand name, or cobrand of plastic packaging sold in or into Washington state.

(4) "Recycling" has the same meaning as defined in RCW 70A.205.015.

(5) "Stakeholder" means a person who may have an interest in or be affected by the management of plastic packaging. [2020 c 20 s 1464; 2019 c 460 s 2. Formerly RCW 70.380.020.]

RCW 70A.520.030 Evaluation and assessment—Report to the legislature. (Expires July 1, 2029.) (1) The department must evaluate and assess the amount and types of plastic packaging sold into the

state as well as the management and disposal of plastic packaging. When conducting the evaluation, the department must ensure that producers, providers of solid waste management services, and stakeholders are consulted. The department must produce a report that includes:

(a) An assessment of the:

(i) Amount and types of plastic packaging currently produced in or coming into the state by category;

(ii) Full cost of managing plastic packaging waste, including the cost to ratepayers, businesses, and others, with consideration given to costs that are determined by volume or weight;

(iii) Final disposition of all plastic packaging sold into the state, based on current information available at the department;

(iv) Costs and savings to all stakeholders in existing product stewardship programs where they have been implemented including, where available, the specific costs for the management of plastic packaging;

(v) Infrastructure necessary to manage plastic packaging in the state;

(vi) Contamination and sorting issues facing the current plastic packaging recycling stream; and

(vii) Existing organizations and databases for managing plastic packaging that could be employed for use in developing a program in the state;

(b) A compilation of:

(i) All the programs currently managing plastic packaging in the state, including all end-of-life management and litter and contamination cleanup; and

(ii) Existing studies regarding the final disposition of plastic packaging and material recovery facilities residual composition, including data on cross-contamination of other recyclables, contamination in compost, and brand data in litter when available;

(c) A review and identification of businesses in Washington that use recycled plastic material as a feedstock or component of a product produced by the company; and

(d) A review of industry and any other domestic or international efforts and innovations to reduce, reuse, and recycle plastic and chemically recycle packaging, utilize recycled content in packaging, and develop new programs, systems, or technologies to manage plastics including innovative technologies such as pyrolysis and gasification processes to divert recoverable polymers and other materials away from landfills and into valuable raw, intermediate, and final products.

(2) The department must contract with a third-party independent consultant to conduct the evaluation and assessment as required under subsection (1) of this section. In developing the recommendations, the department must ensure consistency with the federal food, drug, and cosmetic act (21 U.S.C. Sec. 301 et. seq).

(3) (a) By October 31, 2020, the department must submit a report on the evaluation and assessment of plastic packaging to the appropriate committees of the legislature. The department must cite the sources of information that it relied upon in the report and that the independent consultant relied upon in the assessment, including any sources of peer-reviewed science.

(b) The report required under this subsection must include:

(i) Findings regarding amount and types of plastic packaging sold into the state as well as the management and disposal of plastic packaging;

(ii) Recommendations to meet the goals of reducing plastic packaging, including through industry initiative or plastic packaging product stewardship, or both, to:

(A) Achieve one hundred percent recyclable, reusable, or compostable packaging in all goods sold in Washington by January 1, 2025;

(B) Achieve at least twenty percent postconsumer recycled content in packaging by January 1, 2025; and

(C) Reduce plastic packaging when possible optimizing the use to meet the need; and

(iii) For the purposes of legislative consideration, options to meet plastic packaging reduction goals, that are capable of being established and implemented by January 1, 2022. For proposed options, the department must identify expected costs and benefits of the proposal to state and local government agencies to administer and enforce the rule, and to private persons or businesses, by category of type of person or business affected. [2019 c 460 s 3. Formerly RCW 70.380.030.]

RCW 70A.520.900 Expiration date. This chapter expires July 1, 2029. [2019 c 460 s 4. Formerly RCW 70.380.900.]