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## **Recycling bill signed into law by Governor Ferguson**

*SB5284 modernizes Washington's recycling system and brings the system to residents across the state*

Olympia – On Saturday Governor Ferguson signed Washington's Recycling Reform Act ([Senate Bill 5284](#)) into law. The bill updates the state's recycling system by creating a producer responsibility organization to require manufacturers and consumer brands to reduce unnecessary packaging, fund statewide collection services, and ensure materials put in curbside bins are recycled.

"As a lifelong, passionate advocate for protecting our planet by reducing our waste, I couldn't be more proud that our team triumphed in passing this bill into law," said Sen. Liz Lovelett (D-Anacortes), the bill's prime sponsor. "Generations of Washingtonians will benefit from this nation-leading policy."

"This has been a multi-year process that involved hundreds of meetings with stakeholders across the board," said Rep. Liz Berry (D-Seattle), the sponsor of companion legislation the House. "I'm thrilled that under this new law recycling will be more affordable, accessible and equitable for all Washingtonians."

The law covers packaging and paper products, including beverage containers.

"The Recycling Reform Act will mean lower utility bills for our residents, while delivering the transparency and accountability we need to make important program improvements and strengthen the public's trust in our recycling system," said Andrew Lee, General Manager and CEO of Seattle Public Utilities. "For many years, Seattle has been working hard to advocate for this policy, which will require companies to pay for the bulk of recycling system costs."

"Successful programs have been in place in the EU for decades and in Canada and other countries more recently," said Andy Smith, Recycling and Environmental Services Manager at King County Solid Waste Division. "This is a proven approach that increases recycling rates, cleans up commodity streams, reduces materials going to the landfill, and provides more living wage jobs. This is a major step forward in tackling the climate crisis."

"Plastic pollution is a serious problem in Washington, and it's about time we tackle this problem at its source," said Jeremy Lucas, Oceana's Field Representative in Washington. "The development of plastic source reduction targets required by the Recycling Reform Act is critical to protecting our oceans, communities, and health."

Similar laws have been adopted by Maine, Oregon, Colorado, California, Minnesota, and earlier this week, Maryland. Washington's law differs from the other states in that it includes a fund dedicated to supporting reuse systems such as refillable soda bottles and durable, reusable take-home container systems.

"The passage of this law represents an historic step forward for better recycling and the potential for innovative reuse systems. We see so many single-use plastics in our litter cleanup events," said Sean Dixon, Executive Director of Puget

Soundkeeper Alliance. “We expect this will also result in less litter and plastic material impacting our rivers, lakes and marine waters, and commend the effort it took to make this move to a more sustainable future.”

Nora Nickum, Seattle Aquarium’s Vice President of Conservation Programs and Partnerships, continued, “Plastic pollution is a major problem for marine wildlife, but it’s not the only material we need to address. In addition to plastic, the new law also covers packaging like boxes, cans, and bottles made from paper, metal, and glass, making sure it actually gets recycled rather than ending up in landfills or out in the environment.”

“We are already starting to see brands and manufacturers start to shift from plastic to paper packaging,” Peter Steelquist, Washington Policy Manager for the Surfrider Foundation added. “And under this new law, they are going to be highly motivated to develop better alternatives and reduce the amount of excess packaging and plastic. This will mean less packaging that ends up in our waters and beaches.”

“The new law would bring recycling services to an estimated additional 500,000 homes across the state, especially in rural areas and multi-family residences,” said Heather Trim, Executive Director of Zero Waste Washington. “This means we need more trucks, more recycling facilities and thus more jobs in Washington.”

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