

# REDUCE WASTEFUL PACKAGING, MODERNIZE RECYCLING & CREATE NEW JOBS



## THE PROBLEM:

With \$104 million in valuable consumer paper and packaging ending up in our landfills each year, Washington is wasting a tremendous opportunity to create jobs, strengthen local supply chains and economies, and modernize the recycling system.

### Valuable materials are being wasted.

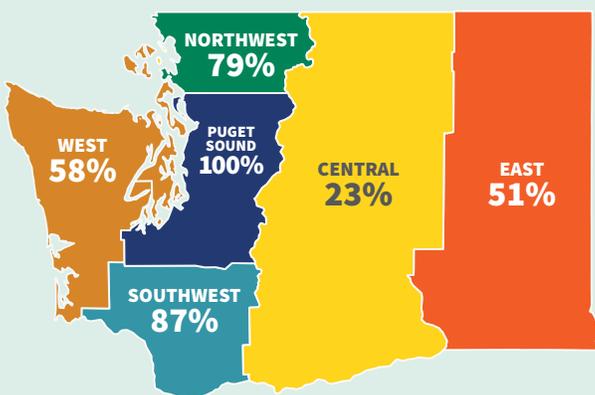
- Greater than 50% of Washington's consumer paper and packaging ends up in landfills and incinerators adding up to over \$104 million<sup>1</sup> in value.
- Modernization of our recycling system would lead to cleaner materials that could then be made into new products.

### Packaging waste and confusion are growing.

- Washingtonians want to recycle but are confused because recycling rules vary across cities and counties.
- Companies produce excessive packaging and are not incentivized to reduce it or use packaging that minimizes environmental impacts.

### Recycling costs are increasing.

- More packaging entering our homes has made recycling challenging and costly for local governments to operate – and more expensive for residents.
- Residents' recycling service bills have increased by up to 30% over the past five years.



Percent of households with curbside recycling services

## Not every Washingtonian has the same access to recycling.

Access varies across the state and many Washington residents must pay extra for recycling services. Residents in 11 counties have no access to recycling services at all.

<sup>1</sup> Calculated using data from the Washington Statewide Waste Characterization Study (2021)

# THE SOLUTION:

## Modernize Washington's recycling system.

Create a producer responsibility program in which manufacturers and brands come together to reduce unnecessary packaging and paper, fund statewide recycling services, and ensure that materials are actually recycled.



## This is a proven solution:

- Companies have been complying with producer responsibility programs in many other countries since the 1990s, with great results.
- California, Colorado, Maine, and Oregon have passed producer responsibility programs and more states are considering putting their own programs in place.

## A producer responsibility program for packaging and paper will:



Reduce emissions and improve our environment by increasing our reuse and recycling rates.



Make it easy to recycle by increasing access, including at apartments and in rural areas.



Reduce confusion and contamination by developing a clear common list of what can be recycled statewide.



Save local governments and residents money by covering the costs of recycling programs.



Support Washington's economy by building local supply chains and recycling businesses and creating new, green jobs.



Create financial incentives for companies to reduce unnecessary packaging and use greener, more recyclable materials.