

About these Principles

With momentum surging in state legislatures to tackle our waste crisis, we face a pivotal opportunity to catalyze the new reuse economy. State legislation such as Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and Deposit Return Systems (DRS) must focus on transitioning to a circular economy that prioritizes reuse. The best solutions are place-based, which is why these principles include flexibility for policies to reflect each state's unique needs.

Principles for Reuse/Refill in EPR and DRS

- 1. Institutionalize reuse through producer funding and financial incentives.** Require producers to invest in reuse infrastructure and incorporate financial incentives for producers to transition to reusables. Create convenient, self-reinforcing systems to maximize consumer participation, ideally with financial incentives to return or refill reusables and beverage containers. For example, deposits have been shown to be the most successful way to ensure consumers return reusables. Any consumer deposits should be covered by SNAP or other food assistance programs.
- 2. Mandate and measure reuse.** EPR and DRS policies should either set reuse targets in statute or regulations, or create a mechanism for targets to be set and reassessed in the future, such as requiring producers to propose reuse targets through a stewardship plan.

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- 3. Enact DRS and EPR as complementary policies.** Ideally, Deposit Return Systems (DRS) should come *before* EPR or at the same time. DRS builds out infrastructure for collection, washing, and redistribution of reusable beverage containers that is crucial for scaling reuse. Additionally, deposits or other financial incentives are proven ways to ensure that consumers return reusable packaging into the right collection systems. Learn more [here](#).
- 4. Clearly define “reusable” packaging.** Reusable packaging must be part of an organized return or refill system that allows companies or consumers to repeatedly reuse it for its original purpose in its original form. A return/refill system, for the purposes of EPR and DRS, does not rely on individual consumer choices to achieve reuse.
- 5. Center justice and equity in process and content.** Develop policies inclusively and ensure continued, meaningful community engagement – especially of low-income communities and communities of color – throughout program implementation. Prioritize the prevention and mitigation of environmental and health impacts from waste management, disposal, and litter in frontline communities, and ensure equitable access to reuse and recycling.
- 6. Allow flexibility; avoid barriers to reuse.** Minimize barriers to the nascent reuse sector by encouraging competition, correcting outdated food codes and other conflicting policies, and avoiding overly burdensome reporting and other administrative requirements on reuse operators. ♦

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