

WASTE PREVENTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES: RECYCLING MODERNIZATION ACT UPDATE

Date: July 1, 2024
Department: Waste Prevention and Environmental Services

Meeting Date: July 23, 2024

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Presenter(s):
Marta McGuire, Waste Prevention and Environmental Services Director,
Tom Egleston, Policy Program and Development Manager and
Jill Hrycyk, Program Manager
Length: 30 minutes

ISSUE STATEMENT

Waste Prevention and Environmental Services staff are working closely with Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), cities and counties, service providers, community partners and the proposed producer responsibility organization, Circular Action Alliance, to prepare for implementation of the Recycling Modernization Act. This includes rulemaking, providing feedback on the proposed Producer Responsibility Organization Program Plan and preparing for an expansion of recycling options in greater Portland.

This informational session is a follow-up from the October 2023 work session and will include updates on Recycling Modernization Act implementation and ties to goals of the Garbage and Recycling System Facilities Plan.

ACTION REQUESTED

No Council action is requested at this time.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION

The Recycling Modernization Act was passed by the Oregon State Legislature in 2021, and recycling program changes will begin in July 2025. The Act is an exciting step forward for Oregon as it will make it easier for people across the state to recycle and put shared responsibility on producers to ensure that recyclable materials are sent to environmentally and socially responsible end markets.

Producer responsibility is a big part of what makes the Recycling Modernization Act so impactful. The Act brings businesses that produce and sell packaging, paper products and food serviceware into the recycling system as partners, requiring that they share recycling costs alongside local governments, recycling facilities and people who pay garbage and recycling fees.

Metro is a collaborator on the Recycling Modernization Act. While contributing to the Act's development, Metro staff advocated for Council's priority targets for meeting climate and resilience goals as well as growing a resilient economy for all. The Recycling Modernization Act supports Metro's priority targets and 2030 Regional Waste Plan goals through efforts to reduce plastic pollution, ensure recyclable materials are sent to responsible end markets with proven environmental benefits, and create more jobs with living wages. Waste Prevention and Environmental Services staff are currently participating in the rulemaking process and working with producer responsibility organization, Circular Action Alliance, on program planning.

What's next.

Circular Action Alliance is conducting a needs assessment with local governments and service providers this summer. The needs assessment, called the Oregon Recycling System Optimization Project, will gather data through an online questionnaire to identify regional waste system expansion needs. WPES staff are submitting information on our existing transfer facilities, household hazardous waste collection events and contamination reduction programming. Since Metro Central and Metro South are existing recycling depots, staff will soon begin negotiations with Circular Action Alliance for reimbursement of eligible collection costs for Recycling Modernization Act covered materials such as polystyrene (Styrofoam), single-use pressurized propane cylinders and plastic film.

Additionally, staff are coordinating with internal teams and local government partners to ensure future programs and service offerings supported by the Recycling Modernization Act align with Council's direction on the Garbage and Recycling System Facilities Plan and future and existing extended producer responsibility programs.