

SUPPORT HB 647

Topic: Extended Producer Responsibility

Bill Patron: Delegate Betsy Carr

Reasons to support HB 647:

- We have long relied on a broken recycling system and local stewards to keep Virginia's land and water litter free. This approach has proven to be insufficient in action, funding, and impact as it does little to reduce single-use products or to hold producers responsible.
- Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is used around the world to save money for localities, increase recycling rates, and incentivize packaging design to reduce waste.
- Localities have no control over the types of materials that end up as waste yet are responsible for the costs of waste management and recycling.
- Single use plastics are particularly problematic for our cities and counties. These products are the most commonly found littered products in Virginia and have a devastating impact on our wildlife and special places. They are also costly and difficult for localities to recycle.
- Under a Packaging Stewardship Program and Fund, manufacturers – not individuals or taxpayers – are responsible for the waste their products create, and bear responsibility for the collection and proper recycling of those products at the end of their useful lives. This incentivizes producers to design their products to be more environmentally friendly throughout their lifecycle.
- Producer responsibility programs around the world have existed for decades and have successfully increased collection and recycling rates for the products they cover.
- Establishing a Packaging Stewardship Program and Fund in Virginia could more than double recycling, helping to keep more trash out of landfills, incinerators, and our environment.

Overview:

Establishes the Packaging Stewardship Program, administered by the Department of Environmental Quality. Under the Program, a producer that sells products with packaging materials in the Commonwealth pays a fee to the Department based upon the amount of packaging used and whether or not it is easily recyclable. The fees are paid into the Packaging Stewardship Fund and are used to reimburse participating localities for expenses related to recycling, invest in recycling infrastructure and education, and pay administrative costs related to the Program. The bill also establishes a Stewardship Advisory Committee, with 23 members appointed by the Director of the Department, to oversee implementation of the Program.



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