Update to the Source Reduction Baseline

A Plastic Pollution Prevention and Packaging Producer Responsibility Act Report

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Source Reduction Requirements

The Plastic Pollution Prevention and Packaging Producer Responsibility Act (Senate Bill (SB) 54, Allen, Chapter 75, Statutes of 2022) (the Act) and 14 California Code of Regulations (CCR) sections 18980.1 through 18980.14, establish an extended producer responsibility (EPR) program to reduce waste generated by single-use packaging and single-use plastic food service ware (covered material) in California. The program also ensures the remaining material is recycled or composted to meet the state's recycling and climate goals.

The source reduction targets, outlined in PRC section 42057, require the producer responsibility organization (PRO) to reduce plastic covered material (as measured by both weight and number of plastic components of plastic covered material sold, offered for sale or distributed in the state by producers compared to the 2023 baseline year) by at least:

- 10% by January 1, 2027
- 20% by January 1, 2030
- 25% by January 1, 2032

In meeting the targets, the PRO must utilize transitions to reusable or refillable alternatives to single-use plastic covered material by at least:

- 2% by January 1, 2027
- 4% by January 1, 2030
- 10% by January 1, 2032

The PRO may meet up to 8% of the source reduction requirements in any year through use of post-consumer recycled content in plastic covered material. Source reduction credit for post-consumer recycled content requires CalRecycle approval of an alternative compliance formula provided in the PRO plan.

The source reduction targets for plastic covered material are a collective responsibility that must be achieved through the PRO plan, rather than requirements applied uniformly to individual producers or uniformly to each covered material category. The PRO may achieve the targets from any combination of reductions to weight and number of plastic components from the collective universe of plastic covered material. All participant producers and plastic covered material reach compliance so long as the collective reductions realized through the PRO plan meet or exceed the target amounts.

Background

In accordance with the statutory requirement in PRC section 42057(b), CalRecycle established the original 2023 source reduction baseline (SRB) on December 31, 2024. In the absence of producer reporting, the original 2023 SRB (DRRR-2024-1747) was modeled under contract (DRR24011) utilizing publicly available and third-party data on 2023 plastic generation (manufacturing, trade, distribution, and sales).

As required by 14 CCR section 18980.9(c), this report updates the previously published 2023 SRB based on reporting from producers on the amount of plastic covered material for which they were the producer in 2023.

The baseline is the benchmark for measuring source reduction progress. It estimates the amount of single-use plastic packaging and single-use plastic food service ware sold, offered for sale, or distributed in California in 2023, using two key metrics:

1. **Number of plastic components** of covered material sold, offered for sale, or distributed in the state.
2. **Total weight of plastic** in the covered material sold, offered for sale, or distributed in the state. The weight must not include nonplastic material, regardless of whether the covered material partially consists of nonplastic (i.e., paper, metal, glass, etc.).

Unlike the original 2023 SRB, which CalRecycle established based on modeled values, the updated baseline uses data reported by producers. That difference contributed to discrepancies between the original and updated baselines. The updated baseline is specific to participant producers and will be used as the basis to measure progress towards achieving the source reduction requirements.

Updated Source Reduction Baseline

The updated source baseline includes data from 2,127 producers of plastic covered material, accounting for about 50% of total participant producers. Based on the data provided by producers, the updated source reduction baseline estimates the amount of single-use plastic packaging and single-use plastic food service ware sold, offered for sale, or distributed in California in 2023 is:

- 1.03 million tons of plastic covered material
- 222 billion plastic components

CalRecycle endeavors to publish an accurate and complete 2023 source reduction baseline that includes data from all participant producers. Participant producers whose data is not represented in this updated 2023 SRB must submit new or corrected data that will be reviewed by CalRecycle for inclusion in a future correction.