

Plastic Pollution Prevention and Packaging Producer Responsibility Act

Needs Assessment Cumulative Report: Source Reduction Baseline

Released December 31, 2024

This report establishes a baseline measurement to ensure that California achieves the nation's strongest source reduction targets for producers to sell less single-use plastic packaging and food service ware, as required by [the Plastic Pollution Prevention and Packaging Producer Responsibility Act](#) (Senate Bill 54, Allen, Chapter 75, Statutes of 2022, "the Act").

California is supporting a waste-free, circular economy by reducing plastic waste with goals to:

- Cut the amount of single-use plastic packaging and food service ware in our state by 25%.
- Hold producers responsible for reducing these single-use plastics.

The Act establishes an extended producer responsibility program to reduce waste generated by single-use packaging and single-use plastic food service ware sold in California, while ensuring the rest is recycled or composted to meet our state's recycling and climate goals.

By 2032, the Act requires that the Producer Responsibility Organization work with industry to reach the following source reduction goals for single-use plastic packaging and single-use plastic food service ware [Public Resources Code Section 42057(a)]:

- 25% reduction of the weight of plastic, and
- 25% reduction of the number of plastic components.

These goals apply to both fully plastic items as well as partially plastic items.

The Source Reduction Baseline

Effectively reducing plastic pollution in California first requires an understanding of how much single-use plastic is generated in the state.

To define quantitative source reduction targets, CalRecycle established a baseline weight and number of plastic components associated with single-use plastic packaging and plastic food service ware sold, offered for sale, or distributed in the state in the 2023 calendar year [Public Resources Code Sections 42057(b)].

CalRecycle estimates that in 2023, more than **2.9 million tons of plastic** were used in single-use plastic packaging and plastic food service ware — and that collectively these items were made up of **171.4 billion plastic components**.

Using this baseline, the Producer Responsibility Organization must reduce single-use plastics by approximately:

- 725,000 tons of plastic and
- 43 billion plastic components.

About the Source Reduction Baseline

As part of implementing the Act, CalRecycle is collaboratively developing the initial statewide Needs Assessment (Public Resources Code section 42067) with the Producer Responsibility Organization, Advisory Board, communities, and other interested parties. The Needs Assessment identifies the actions and resources required to implement the law successfully.

The 2023 source reduction baseline, published by CalRecycle as part of the initial statewide Needs Assessment, serves as:

- A baseline to measure progress towards the required 25% source reduction.
- The foundation for identifying actions and investments needed to reduce single-use plastic packaging and plastic food service ware as required by the Act.
- An important source of information for the PRO to develop their producer responsibility plan and budget.

CalRecycle worked with a contractor to estimate the source reduction baseline and develop a model utilizing publicly available and third-party data on plastic generation (manufacturing, trade, distribution, and sales) to estimate the approximate amount of single-use plastic packaging and food service ware sold, offered for sale, or distributed in California in 2023.

The model separately calculates the amount of single-use plastic packaging and single-use plastic food service ware. For packaging, the weight of plastic and number of plastic components was estimated based on the amount of products sold in California. For food service ware, the estimates were based on the number of meals eaten out or at home using disposable plastics.

All data sources used were audited for accuracy, completeness, and timeliness. A gap analysis was performed to ensure data was representative of various industry sectors.

For additional information on the Source Reduction Baseline, including methodology, please refer to the [Source Reduction Baseline Technical Report](#).