

Testimony Before the New York State Joint Legislative Budget Hearing on FY 2023 Budget

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The Recycling Partnership

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Hello Chairs Senator Kruger and Assemblywoman Weinstein and esteemed members of the committee.

My name is Michael Washburn, and I am a senior policy advisor at The Recycling Partnership. The Partnership is a national nonprofit that works with companies, communities, and policymakers across the country to strengthen public recycling programs. We do this through education, technical assistance, grantmaking and policy engagement. We believe policy that strengthens recycling is a key ingredient to achieving a circular economy.

Throughout 2020, The Recycling Partnership's policy arm, the Circular Economy Accelerator, managed a stakeholder dialogue process, and convened some of the private sector's largest consumer brands, manufacturers, waste and commodity industries, and materials associations to inform its own policy solution. The resulting policy report outlines a shared responsibility model proposing a packaging and printed paper fee paid by private sector brands to support residential recycling infrastructure and education.

Vetted by more than 30 member organizations of the Accelerator – and endorsed by Alpek Polyester, Aluminum Association, American Beverage, American Chemistry Council, Association of Plastic Recyclers, Ball Corporation, Can Manufacturers Institute, The Coca-Cola Company, Danone, Dow, Glass Packaging Institute, Indorama, Keurig Dr Pepper, Mars, Nestle, PepsiCo, the Sustainable Food Policy Alliance, and Unilever – the Circular Economy Accelerator policy proposal advances the opportunity for the private sector to act as stewards of the circular economy.

The most successful EPR programs around the world are those that empower industry to develop a program to meet a goal, and then be held accountable to that goal by the state. Legislation that establishes a strong producer responsibility organization (PRO), empowers that PRO to assess needs and develop a plan to address them, and that keeps D.E.C. in the role of regulatory agency will likely achieve the strongest results. An advisory committee to D.E.C. that represents non-industry stakeholders is important so that the recycling system can reflect other interests and be inclusive of all communities and stakeholders.

The Recycling Partnership applauds the inclusion of strong policy to support recycling in the budget and we stand ready to help by way of convening stakeholders, providing our expertise around technical issues, communicating about the potential for a well-designed and -implemented producer responsibility program to advance recycling in New York, and enabling program success after passage.

Thank you for including me in today's hearing.