

# Colorado Extended Producer Responsibility Needs Assessment

Statewide, Colorado

In 2022, the Colorado Legislature passed a bill to set guidelines to implement and manage a statewide recycling program for residences, public spaces, businesses, schools, hospitality locations, and government buildings. The bill also set guidelines and dates for assessing the state's current recycling services and reporting results to the legislature.

The Extended Producer Responsibility Needs Assessment—the first of its kind in the United States—is the first step, a comprehensive assessment of the current recycling system. In evaluating the existing recycling services and infrastructure for managing single-use packaging and paper products and identifying gaps in existing services, the team produced more than 100,000 data points from interviews, tours, surveys, webinars, research, hundreds of comments, and dozens of stakeholder meetings in just four months.

The result showed disparities in recycling opportunities, often dependent on where residents live. The new statewide recycling program could increase curbside recycling availability from 20% to 55% of rural households, with others receiving more access to drop-off collection.

The team developed three future recycling scenarios based on cost, performance and potential improvements. These scenarios outline the recycling and collection rates the state could achieve by 2030 and 2035, as well as operating and capital costs. After soliciting and receiving public comments, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment recommended one scenario to the state legislature.

Funded by companies responsible for consumer packaging and paper products, the EPR program provides equitable and convenient recycling services, and could double the state's current recycling rate for select materials.



**Project:** Colorado Extended Producer Responsibility Needs Assessment | Statewide, Colorado

**Client:** Circular Action Alliance | Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

**Entrant:** HDR | Denver, Colorado

