Upstream

Prioritizing waste prevention in Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) laws

EPR Can change the throw-away culture and build a reuse economy that's better for people and planet

The most effective way to reduce waste is not to create it in the first place.

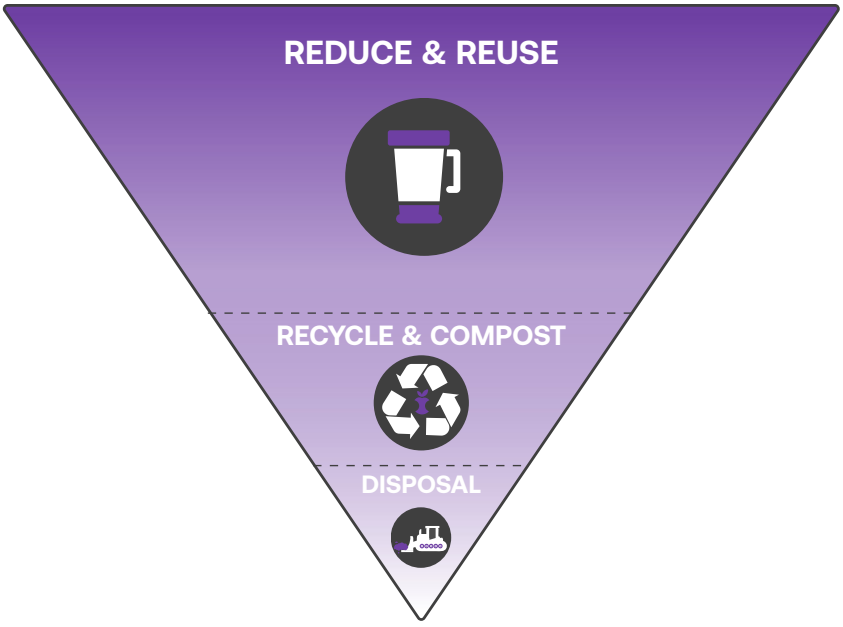
In the waste management hierarchy, the first two Rs – Reduce and Reuse – are way better for the planet than Recycling. Reusable packaging reduces resource extraction, energy consumption, water consumption, pollution impacts, and litter.

Reduce/Reuse means ensuring producers:

- eliminate unnecessary packaging and
- make the rest reusable or refillable by developing new reuse/refill systems for delivering products to consumers.

How EPR laws can help to reduce waste at the source

1. **Eco-modulated fees:** highest fees on least recyclable, least compostable packaging- NO fees on reusable and refillable
2. **Mandatory reduction targets:** producers must reduce the **number** of packaging items used each year. Suggested rate: 10% every 2 years, to reach 50% in 10 years.
3. **Reuse infrastructure funding:** 20% of fees collected by producer responsibility organization funds reuse/refill infrastructure.



Reuse is better for the planet.

A 20% conversion to reusable packaging will reduce 1.3 million metric tons of CO_2, 3.5 billion cubic meters of water, and 10 million tons of materials.

50% will achieve a 3.7 million metric ton reduction of CO_2, 10 billion cubic meters of water, and 28 million tons of materials.

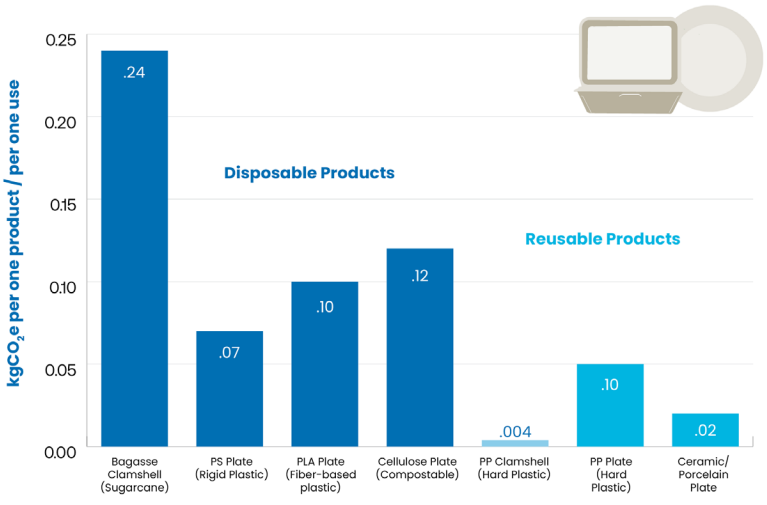
	Savings in 2027, 20% reuse rate	Savings in 2030, 50% reuse rate
Climate	~1.3M tons CO_2	3.7M tons CO_2
equivalent to...	CO_2 absorbed by 59 million trees	CO_2 absorbed by 170 million trees
Water	~3.5 billion cubic meters	10 billion cubic meters
equivalent to...	1.4 million olympic pools	4 million olympic pools
Material Use	10M tons	~28M tons
equivalent to...	1.26 million truckloads	3.5 million truckloads

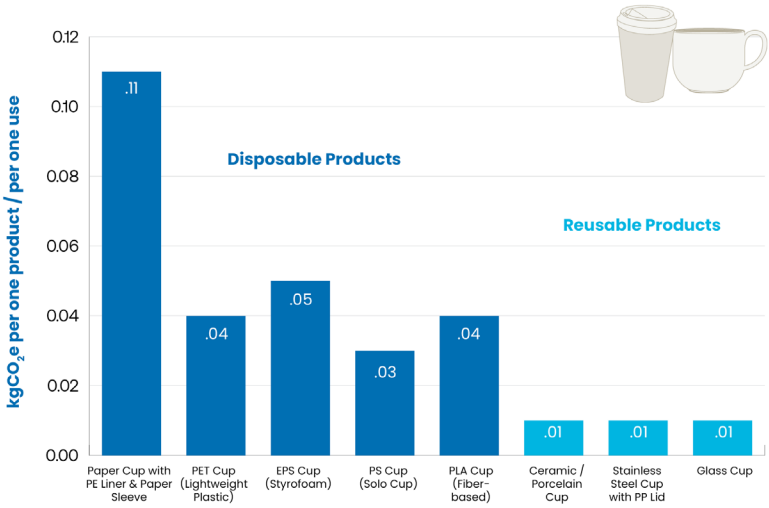
Reusable packaging is up to 85% more climate-friendly than disposable packaging.[1]

Beverage Bottles. Reusable glass bottles product 85% fewer carbon emissions than single-use glass bottles, 75% fewer than plastic, and 57% fewer than aluminum cans.[2]

Transport packaging. Reusable plastic crates produce 88% less carbon emissions than cardboard boxes.[3]

Cups. Disposable paper, plastic, and bioplastic cups have 3 to 10 times more carbon emissions impact than reusable ceramic, stainless steel, and glass.[4]





Endnotes

1 Zero Waste Europe, Reloop, University of Utrecht, "Reusable vs Single-Use Packaging: A Review of Environmental Impact"
2 id.
3 id.
4 Upstream (2021). Reuse Wins.