

**HOUSE . . . . . No.**

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

PRESENTED BY:

*Jeffrey N. Roy*

*To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:*

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

**An Act relative to enhancing circularity in recycling.**

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Jeffrey N. Roy</i>	<i>10th Norfolk</i>	<i>1/9/2025</i>

**HOUSE . . . . . No.**

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[Pin Slip]

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[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION  
SEE HOUSE, NO. 893 OF 2023-2024.]

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court  
(2025-2026)**  
\_\_\_\_\_

An Act relative to enhancing circularity in recycling.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

1           The General Laws are hereby amended by inserting after Chapter 94I the following  
2 chapter:-

3           CHAPTER 94J.

4           ENHANCING CIRCULARITY IN RECYCLING.

5           Section 1. As used in this chapter the following words shall, unless the context clearly  
6 requires otherwise, have the following meanings:-

7           "Beverage", any ready to drink liquid for human consumption. Beverage shall not  
8 include infant formula, medical food, fortified oral nutritional supplements used for persons who  
9 require supplemental or sole source nutritional needs due to special dietary needs directly related

10 to cancer, chronic kidney disease, diabetes or other medical conditions as determined by the  
11 department.

12 "Covered product", an item in 1 of the following categories subject to minimum post-  
13 consumer recycled content requirements: (i) plastic trash bags; (ii) plastic carry-out bags; (iii)  
14 plastic beverage containers; (iv) rigid plastic containers, including food containers and household  
15 cleaning and personal care product packaging. Covered product shall not include any type of  
16 container or bag for which the commonwealth is preempted from regulating content of the  
17 container material or bag material under federal law.

18 "Department", department of environmental protection.

19 "Food", articles used for food or drink for consumption by humans or other animals, and  
20 articles used for components of any such article.

21 "Glass container", a container made of glass that is filled with a food or beverage.

22 "Hot fill process", a process to sterilize both a food product and its container during the  
23 food packaging process, in which the food product is heated to a temperature between 194 and  
24 203 degrees Fahrenheit and then injected into the container.

25 "Paper carryout bag", a bag made of paper that is sold or provided by a store to a  
26 customer for the purpose of containing, carrying, and transporting food, beverages or retail  
27 goods.

28 "Person", an individual, corporation, company, association, society, firm, partnership or  
29 joint stock company.

30 "Plastic", a synthetic material made from linking monomers through a chemical reaction  
31 to create an organic polymer chain that can be molded or extruded at high heat into various solid  
32 forms retaining their defined shapes during the life cycle and after disposal. Plastic shall not  
33 include material that is designed to be composted in a municipal or industrial aerobic composting  
34 facility and that is certified by a recognized third-party independent verification body as meeting  
35 the standards therefor established by the American Society for Testing and Materials in ASTM  
36 D6400 or ASTM D6868.

37 "Plastic beverage container", an individual, sealable, separate bottle, can, jar, carton or  
38 other container made of plastic that is intended to contain a beverage up to 2 gallons in capacity.  
39 Plastic beverage container does not include: (i) refillable beverage containers, such as containers  
40 that are sufficiently durable for multiple rotations of their original or similar purpose and are  
41 intended to function in a system of reuse; (ii) rigid plastic containers or plastic bottles that are or  
42 are used for medical devices, medical products that are required to be sterile, nonprescription and  
43 prescription drugs or dietary supplements; (iii) liners, bladders, caps, corks, closures, labels and  
44 other items added but otherwise separate from the structure of the bottle or container; and (iv)  
45 containers certified as industrial compostable pursuant to ASTM D6400 or D6868.

46 "Plastic carryout bag", a bag made of plastic, of any thickness, whether woven or  
47 nonwoven, that is sold or provided by a store to a customer for the purpose of containing,  
48 carrying and transporting food, beverages or retail goods.

49 "Plastic trash bag", a bag that is made of plastic, is at least 0.70 mils thick, and is  
50 designed and manufactured for use as a container to hold, store, or transport materials to be

51 discarded, composted or recycled, and includes, but is not limited to, a garbage bag, lawn or leaf  
52 bag, can-liner bag, kitchen bag or compactor bag.

53 "Postconsumer material", a material or product that has completed its intended end use  
54 and product life cycle, and which has been separated from the solid waste stream for the  
55 purposes of collection and recycling. Postconsumer material shall not include pre-consumer or  
56 post-industrial secondary waste material or materials and by-products generated from, and  
57 commonly used within, an original manufacturing and fabrication process.

58 "Producer". the following person responsible, including a manufacturer, for compliance  
59 with minimum post-consumer recycled content requirements for a covered product sold, offered  
60 for sale or distributed in or into the commonwealth: (i) if the covered product is sold under the  
61 producer's own brand or lacks identification of a brand, the producer is the person who  
62 manufactures the covered product; (ii) if the covered product is manufactured by a person other  
63 than the brand owner, the producer is the person who is the licensee of a brand or trademark  
64 under which a covered product is sold, offered for sale or distributed in or into the  
65 commonwealth, whether or not the trademark is registered in the commonwealth, unless the  
66 manufacturer or brand owner of the covered product has agreed to accept responsibility under  
67 this chapter; or (iii) if there is no person described in this chapter over whom the commonwealth  
68 can constitutionally exercise jurisdiction, the producer is the person who imports or distributes  
69 the covered product in or into the commonwealth. Producer shall not include: (a) government  
70 agencies, municipalities or other political subdivisions of the commonwealth; (b) registered  
71 501(c)(3) charitable organizations and 501(c)(4) social welfare organizations.

72 "Rigid plastic container", a container made of plastic that has a relatively inflexible finite  
73 shape or form, has a minimum capacity of 8 fluid ounces or its equivalent volume and a  
74 maximum capacity of 5 fluid gallons or its equivalent volume, and is capable of maintaining its  
75 shape while empty or while holding other products.

76 Section 2. (1) Rigid plastic containers sold or offered for sale in the commonwealth shall  
77 comply with the minimum post-consumer recycled content requirements under this section.

78 (2) Beginning 2 years after the effective date of this chapter, all rigid plastic containers  
79 sold, offered for sale, or used in association with the sale or offer for sale of a product in the  
80 commonwealth by a producer shall contain, on average and in aggregate, at least 10 per cent  
81 postconsumer recycled content.

82 (3) Beginning 5 years after the effective date of this chapter, and every 3 years thereafter,  
83 the percentage of postconsumer recycled content required on average and in aggregate for rigid  
84 plastic containers pursuant to this section shall increase by 10 per cent, until reaching 50 per  
85 cent.

86 (4) A rigid plastic container shall be exempt from the postconsumer recycled content  
87 requirements of this section if it: (i) is associated with a product produced in or brought into the  
88 commonwealth that is destined for shipment to a destination outside the commonwealth, and that  
89 remains with the product upon shipment; (ii) contains drugs, dietary supplements, medical  
90 devices, or cosmetics as those terms are defined in the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, 21  
91 U.S.C. sec.301 et seq.; (iii) contains toxic or hazardous products regulated under the "Federal  
92 Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act," 7 U.S.C. sec.136 et seq.; (iv) is manufactured for  
93 use in the shipment of hazardous materials and is: (a) prohibited from being manufactured with

94 used material by federal packaging material specifications set forth in 49 C.F.R. sec.178.509 and  
95 49 C.F.R. sec.178.522, (b) is subject to the testing standards set forth in 49 C.F.R. sec.178.600  
96 through 49 C.F.R. sec.178.609, or (c) is subject to the recommendations of the United Nations on  
97 the transport of dangerous goods; or (iv) is a refillable container or a reusable container. For the  
98 purposes of this paragraph, "refillable container" means a rigid plastic container that is routinely  
99 returned to and refilled by the producer with the same product packaged by the container; and  
100 "reusable container" means a rigid plastic container that is routinely reused by consumers to store  
101 the original product packaged by the container.

102           Section 3. (1) Plastic beverage containers sold or offered for sale in the commonwealth  
103 shall comply with the minimum post-consumer recycled content requirements under this section.

104           (2) Beginning 2 years after the effective date of this chapter, all plastic beverage  
105 containers shall contain, on average and in aggregate, at least 15 per cent post-consumer recycled  
106 content.

107

108           (3) Beginning 5 years after the effective date of this chapter, and every 3 years thereafter,  
109 the amount of postconsumer recycled content required on average and in aggregate for plastic  
110 beverage containers pursuant to this section shall increase by 5 per cent, until reaching 50 per  
111 cent; except the postconsumer recycled content requirement for producers who utilize a hot fill  
112 process shall not exceed 30 per cent.

113           (4) The provisions of this section shall not apply to a refillable beverage container. For  
114 the purposes of this section, "refillable beverage container" shall mean a beverage container that

115 holds 150 fluid ounces or less of beverage, and which is routinely returned to the producer to be  
116 refilled and resold.

117 Section 4. (1) Glass containers sold or offered for sale in the commonwealth shall comply  
118 with the minimum post-consumer recycled content requirements under this section.

119 (2) Beginning 2 years after the effective date of this chapter, all glass containers shall  
120 contain, on average, and in aggregate, at least 35 per cent postconsumer recycled content; except  
121 that, if a producer certifies to the department that its use of postconsumer recycled content is  
122 made up of at least 50 per cent mixed-color cullet, then the glass containers shall only be  
123 required to contain, on average, at least 25 per cent postconsumer recycled content. As used in  
124 this section, "mixed-color cullet" means cullet that does not meet the American Society for  
125 Testing and Materials (ASTM) standard specifications for the color mix of color-sorted, post-  
126 filled glass as a raw material for the manufacture of glass containers.

127 Section 5. (1) Paper carryout bags sold or offered for sale in the commonwealth shall  
128 comply with the minimum post-consumer recycled content requirements under this section.

129 (2) Beginning 2 years after the effective date of this section, all paper carryout bags shall  
130 contain, on average and in aggregate, at least 40 per cent postconsumer recycled content; except  
131 that a paper carryout bag that holds 8 pounds or less shall only be required to contain, on  
132 average, at least 20 per cent postconsumer recycled content.

133 Section 6. (1) Plastic carryout bags sold or offered for sale in the commonwealth shall  
134 comply with the minimum post-consumer recycled content requirements under this section.



135 (2) Beginning 2 years after the effective date of this chapter, plastic carryout bags shall  
136 contain, on average and in aggregate, at least 20 per cent postconsumer recycled content.

137 (3) Beginning 5 years after the effective date of this chapter, plastic carryout bags shall  
138 contain, on average and in aggregate, at least 40 per cent postconsumer recycled content.

139 Section 7. (1) Plastic trash bags sold or offered for sale in the commonwealth shall  
140 comply with the minimum post-consumer recycled content requirements under this section.

141 (2) Beginning 2 years after the effective date of this chapter, plastic trash bags shall  
142 contain on average and in aggregate the following proportion of postconsumer recycled content:

143 (i) for plastic trash bags greater than 0.70 mils thick but less than 0.80 mils thick, at least five  
144 percent; (ii) for plastic trash bags greater than 0.80 mils thick but less than 1.00 mils thick, at  
145 least 10 percent; and (iii) for plastic trash bags equal to or greater than 1.00 mils thick, at least 20  
146 per cent.

147 (3) Beginning 5 years after the effective date of this chapter, plastic trash bags shall  
148 contain on average and in aggregate the following proportion of postconsumer recycled content:

149 (i) for plastic trash bags greater than 0.70 mils thick but less than 0.80 mils thick, at least 10 per  
150 cent; (ii) for plastic trash bags greater than 0.80 mils thick but less than 1.00 mils thick, at least  
151 20 per cent; and (iii) for plastic trash bags equal to or greater than 1.00 mils thick, at least 40 per  
152 cent.

153 (4) This section shall not apply to a plastic trash bag that is designed and manufactured  
154 to hold, store or transport hazardous waste or regulated medical waste. For the purposes of this  
155 paragraph, "hazardous waste" and "regulated medical waste" shall meet the definition established

156 by the department; provided however, that producers are encouraged to utilize post consumer  
157 recycled content (PCR) unless expressly prohibited.

158 Section 8. (1) A package or container that contains milk products, plant-based products  
159 with names that include the names of dairy foods such as "milk," medical food, food for special  
160 dietary use, or infant formula shall be exempt from the postconsumer recycled content  
161 requirements of this chapter.

162 (2) As used in this section the following terms shall, unless the context clearly requires  
163 otherwise, have the following meanings:

164 "Food for special dietary use", means the same as the term is defined in 21 U.S.C. sec.  
165 350. "Medical food" and

166 "Infant formula", means the same as that term is defined in the Federal Food, Drug, and  
167 Cosmetic Act, 21 U.S.C. sec. 301 et seq.

168 "Medical food", means the same as that term is defined in the Federal Food, Drug, and  
169 Cosmetic Act, 21 U.S.C. sec. 301 et seq.

170 "Milk product", means the same as that term is defined by the United States Food and  
171 Drug Administration.

172 Section 9. (1) A package or container that contains food shall be exempt from the  
173 postconsumer recycled content requirements of this chapter for a period of 5 years beginning on  
174 the effective date of this chapter, except that the exemption provided in this subsection shall not  
175 apply to a plastic beverage container or a glass container filled with a beverage.

176 (2) The department may, in its discretion, extend the 5-year exemption. Upon expiration  
177 of the exemption, a producer shall be subject to the applicable postconsumer recycled content  
178 requirements in effect at the time of the expiration.

179 Section 10. (1) Products or materials sold or offered for sale in the commonwealth may  
180 be waived from the minimum post-consumer recycled content requirements as follows: (i) in  
181 order to qualify, a producer shall submit to the department documentation from a federal or state  
182 agency or certified third-party expert, demonstrating that the producer cannot comply with the  
183 postconsumer recycled content requirements for the following reason: that the producer cannot  
184 maintain compliance with applicable rules and regulations adopted by the United States Food  
185 and Drug Administration, or other applicable state or federal law, rule, or regulation and comply  
186 with the postconsumer recycled content requirements.

187 (2) The department may grant a waiver for a period of up to 2 years. The department  
188 shall publish any determinations to grant waivers on its website.

189 Section 11. (1) For the purposes of determining a producer's compliance with the post-  
190 consumer recycled content requirement, the producer may: (i) determine compliance for the total  
191 quantity of each category of covered materials, by weight, that are sold in the commonwealth.  
192 Compliance shall be determined for each category on average and in aggregate across the  
193 category and shall not be construed as requiring compliance with the requirements for each  
194 individual covered product sold; and (ii) rely on state-specific data regarding covered product  
195 sales and material use, if available, or may alternatively rely on the same type of regional or  
196 national data.

197 (2) If a producer elects to rely on data derived from applicable data that is regional or  
198 national rather than state-specific as provided in clause (ii) of paragraph (1), they shall: (i)  
199 prorate the regional or national data to determine the state-specific figures based on market share  
200 or population in a manner that ensures that the percentage of post-consumer recycled plastic  
201 calculated for covered products sold in the commonwealth is the same percentage as calculated  
202 for that larger region or territory; and (ii) document the methodology used to determine those  
203 state-specific figures calculated under said clause (ii) of said paragraph (1) in the annual report.

204 Section 12. The department shall establish and maintain regulations allowing for a  
205 producer to discharge its obligations under this chapter by making an alternative compliance  
206 payment in an amount established by the department; provided however, that the department  
207 shall set post-consumer recycled content requirement alternative compliance payment rates at  
208 levels that shall stimulate the development of a post-consumer recycled content market. The  
209 department shall establish and maintain regulations outlining procedures by which each  
210 producer, shall annually submit for the department's review a filing illustrating the producer's  
211 compliance with the requirements of this section and the producer's efforts made toward  
212 achieving compliance where commercially feasible.

213 Section 13. (a) The department shall impose penalties on a producer that is in violation of  
214 this chapter. The department may enforce the provisions of this chapter by any of the following:

215 (i) issue an order requiring the person to comply;

216 (ii) bring a civil action;

217 (iii) levy a civil administrative penalty, which the department shall set at an amount that  
218 is higher than the alternative compliance payment that the producer would have paid in carrying  
219 out its obligations under this chapter;

220 (iv) bring an action for a civil penalty;

221 (v) require a producer to submit a corrective action plan; or

222 (vi) notify the public of a producer which, at any time during a reporting period, was not  
223 in compliance with the requirements of this chapter.

224 (b) The exercise of any of the remedies provided in this section shall not preclude  
225 recourse to any other remedy so provided.

226 (c) All penalties shall be placed into a special, non-lapsing account to be known as the  
227 Recycling Enhancement Fund. which shall be credited with all penalties collected. Moneys in the  
228 account may be utilized by the department for administrative expenses incurred in connection  
229 with this chapter for recycling public education and to stimulate the development of a post-  
230 consumer recycled content market.

231 Section 14. (a) Annually, on April 1, following 2 years after the effective date of this  
232 chapter, a producer that offers for sale, sells or distributes covered products into the  
233 commonwealth shall register with the department individually or through a third-party  
234 representative registering on behalf of a group of producers, in a form and manner as prescribed  
235 by the department, and pay an annual registration fee of \$5,000. A producer that fails to register  
236 with the department pursuant to this section shall first receive a written warning. A producer that  
237 receives a written warning shall register with the department no later than 90 days after receipt of

238 the warning. A producer that receives a written warning and that fails to register with the  
239 department within 90 days of receipt of the warning shall be subject to the penalties set forth in  
240 section 13 of this chapter.

241 (b) All registration fees shall be placed into a special, non-lapsing account to be known as  
242 the Recycling Enhancement Fund. Moneys in the account may be utilized by the department for  
243 administrative expenses incurred in connection with this chapter, for recycling public education  
244 and to stimulate the development of a post-consumer recycled content market.

245 Section 15. (1) Annually, on October 1, following 3 years and 6 months after the  
246 effective date of this chapter, each producer shall submit a report certifying, in writing, to the  
247 department the extent to which it is in compliance with the postconsumer recycled content  
248 requirements of this chapter, are otherwise exempt or have been approved for a waiver from the  
249 requirements.

250 (2) The producer shall set forth the specific basis for any exemptions that are claimed,  
251 and submit such proof as the Department determines necessary.

252 (3) The certification shall be signed by an authorized representative of the producer. A  
253 producer shall submit the certification, in the form and manner determined by the department,  
254 under penalty of perjury. The certification shall include: (i) the amount, in pounds, of not post-  
255 consumer, glass or paper; and (ii) the amount, in pounds, of post-consumer recycled material  
256 used by the producer for any products subject to the requirements of this chapter, and any other  
257 information as the department deems necessary.

258 (4) The department may allow independent, third-party verification organizations to  
259 verify producers' compliance with the requirements of this chapter.

260           Section 16. Each producer shall maintain records, in a form prescribed by the department,  
261 that demonstrate whether, how and to what extent the producer has complied with the  
262 postconsumer recycled content requirements, or whether the producer qualifies for an exemption  
263 or waiver from the postconsumer recycled content requirements. The department may adopt  
264 specific requirements for the records required to be maintained pursuant to this section and may  
265 request the records from a producer at any time. A producer shall submit records to the  
266 department no later than 30 days after receipt of a request, unless the department extends that  
267 timeframe.

268           Section 17. The department may audit or investigate a producer, at any time, to assess the  
269 producer's compliance with the requirements of this chapter. Each year, the department may  
270 audit, or cause to be audited, a random sample of producers in order to determine compliance  
271 with this chapter. A producer shall cooperate fully with any audit or investigation conducted  
272 pursuant to this section. The department may require a producer to pay the costs of an audit  
273 conducted pursuant to this section.

274           Section 18. The department shall annually publish a list of registered producers, their  
275 compliance status and other information the department deems appropriate on the department's  
276 website.

277           Section 19. Not later than 2 years after the effective date of this chapter, the department  
278 shall adopt rules and regulations necessary for the implementation of this chapter. Prior to the  
279 adoption of rules and regulations, and as necessary thereafter, the department may develop  
280 guidance as necessary for the implementation of this chapter. The department shall publish any  
281 such guidance on its website.

282           Section 20. Not later than 5 years after the effective date of this chapter, the department  
283 shall prepare and submit an assessment to the governor and the general court evaluating this  
284 chapter's effectiveness in stimulating the recycling markets in the commonwealth and making  
285 any recommendations for legislative or administrative actions necessary to further the purposes  
286 of this chapter, including recommendations for whether and how the commonwealth should  
287 encourage, require or support other uses of recycled material.

288           Section 21. Any proprietary information or trade secrets included in any registration,  
289 certification, alternative compliance plan, corrective action plan, or any other record submitted to  
290 the department shall not be made available to the general public.