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Oregon Recycling System Advisory Council 2024 Legislative Report

Submitted to the interim committees of the Legislative Assembly



This document was prepared by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality on behalf of and in consultation with the Oregon Recycling System Advisory Council

700 NE Multnomah Street, Portland, Oregon, 97232

Contact: Stephanie Caldera

Phone: 971-279-9517

stephanie.caldera@deq.oregon.gov

RecyclingAct.Oregon.gov



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800-452-4011 | TTY: 711 | deqinfo@deq.oregon.gov

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Executive Summary

Oregon is a national leader when it comes to recycling. Oregonians value the environmental benefits of recycling and established state policies in the 1980s and 1990s that require communities to provide recycling opportunities for everyone in the state. In 2018, following China's ban on the import of recycling commodities, Oregon's recycling system was in jeopardy. The Department of Environmental Quality, in partnership with local governments, recycling haulers and processors, producers and more, convened the Recycling Steering Committee. This diverse group reached a consensus on recommended concepts for modernizing Oregon's recycling system. These recommendations became the basis for Senate Bill 582 during the 2021 legislative session. The Oregon Legislature passed the Plastic Pollution and Recycling Modernization Act (RMA), and Governor Brown signed it into law Aug. 6, 2021. The new law took effect Jan. 1, 2022.

The law established the Oregon Recycling System Advisory Council to advise DEQ and Producer Responsibility Organizations (PRO) throughout the implementation of the RMA. The Council will meet at least quarterly in perpetuity.

The Recycling Council has met approximately every two months since forming in May 2022. The Council's key work in 2023 and 2024 included advising DEQ on issues related to the implementation of the RMA, such as making recommendations related to the establishment and maintenance of the recycling acceptance lists, covered products, PRO membership fee structures, recycling depot or mobile collection events, PRO fee distribution and system funding. The Council completed its review and provided written recommendations to the PRO in July 2024 for the first draft of the PRO Plan, and will provide additional recommendations to the PRO and DEQ on future drafts of the proposed plan.

Following the full implementation of the law in 2025, the Council's role will shift from a focus on foundational work to a focus on the maintenance and long-term success of the law. Council members have expressed ongoing support for the timely implementation of RMA elements, including confidence in the Council, DEQ, and the PRO in meeting their obligations to ensure implementation can begin July 1, 2025. As required by the Act, the Recycling Council will provide a report to the interim committees of the Legislative Assembly related to the environment every even-numbered year. The [2022 report](#) is available online, and this report fulfills that requirement for 2024. The full report for 2024 is available through the [Council's website](#).

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The Oregon Recycling System Advisory Council

The Plastic Pollution and Recycling Modernization Act (SB 582, 2021), or RMA, created the Oregon Recycling System Advisory Council. The Recycling Council comprises 17 members appointed by the Governor, plus two non-voting members of the Legislature appointed by the Senate President and Speaker of the House. Members of the Council represent local governments, community-based organizations representing the interests of historically underserved groups, small businesses, environmental nonprofit organizations, the recycling industry, service providers, processors or material end-users and producers of covered products or producer trade associations or suppliers. The Council will advise DEQ and Producer Responsibility Organizations, or PROs, on key recycling system elements, including the uniform statewide collection list, PRO program plans, and much more.

The Recycling Council is an advisory body whose duties began in 2022 during the initial development and implementation phase of the RMA and will continue in perpetuity. The Council will review key elements of the recycling system and provide recommendations to DEQ and the PROs as outlined in [ORS 459A.902](#). These duties include: advising DEQ and the PRO on issues related to the implementation of the RMA; reviewing PRO program plans; making recommendations related to the establishment and maintenance of the recycling acceptance lists, covered products, PRO membership fee structures, recycling depot or mobile collection events, PRO plans to improve access to recycling, PRO fee distribution, system funding, and education campaigns and resources. These activities are primarily done through consultations at Council meetings, with some requirements for formal written recommendations on specific RMA elements as described in law.

The Recycling Modernization Act directs DEQ to provide administrative and staff support and facilities necessary for the Council to carry out its responsibilities.

Recycling Council Members

The Council is comprised of 19 members – 17 are appointed by the Governor and vote on formal actions, two are Legislative representatives appointed by their respective chambers to be non-voting in their advisory roles. Membership requirements for the voting members are defined in law, to provide a diversity of experiences and interest among Council members.

Council members serve staggered three-year terms, with the initial terms of appointment being one, two or three years. Starting in July 2025, all appointments, or reappointments, will be for a full three-year term. The role of the Chair and Vice-Chair will last one year, elected by the Council in December of each year.

The lists below show the members as of Sept. 1, 2024. Current terms for each member are noted on the [Council's website](#).

Governor Appointed

Name	Organization	Represents
Scott Byrne	Sonoco	Producers
Sonya Carlson	BRING Recycling	Environmental Nonprofit
Taylor Cass Talbott (Vice-chair, 2024)	Ground Score Association	Community-Based Organizations
Dylan de Thomas	The Recycling Partnership	Producers
Dan Felton	AMERIPEN	Producers
Sergio Garcia-Cruz	Centro Cultural	Community-based organizations
Jill Hrycyk	Oregon Metro	Local Government
Scott Keller (Chair, 2024)	City of Beaverton	Local Government
Commissioner Steve Kramer	Wasco County	Local Government
Laura Leebrick	Rogue Waste Systems	Recycling Industry
Angie Marzano	Lane County	Local Government
Celeste Meiffren-Swango (Vice-chair, 2023)	Environment Oregon	Environmental Nonprofit
Joan Popowics	Procter & Gamble	Producers
Alando Simpson	City of Roses Disposal & Recycling	Recycling Industry
Vinod Singh	Far West Recycling	Recycling Industry
Elizabeth Start	Start Consulting Group	Small Business
<i>Vacancy</i>	-	<i>Recycling Industry</i>

Legislators

Name	Organization	Represents
Sen. Lynn Findey	Oregon Legislature	Oregon Senate
Rep. Susan McLain	Oregon Legislature	Oregon House

DEQ Recycling Council Staff

Cheryl Grabham – Materials Management Program Manager
 Stephanie Caldera - Project Manager

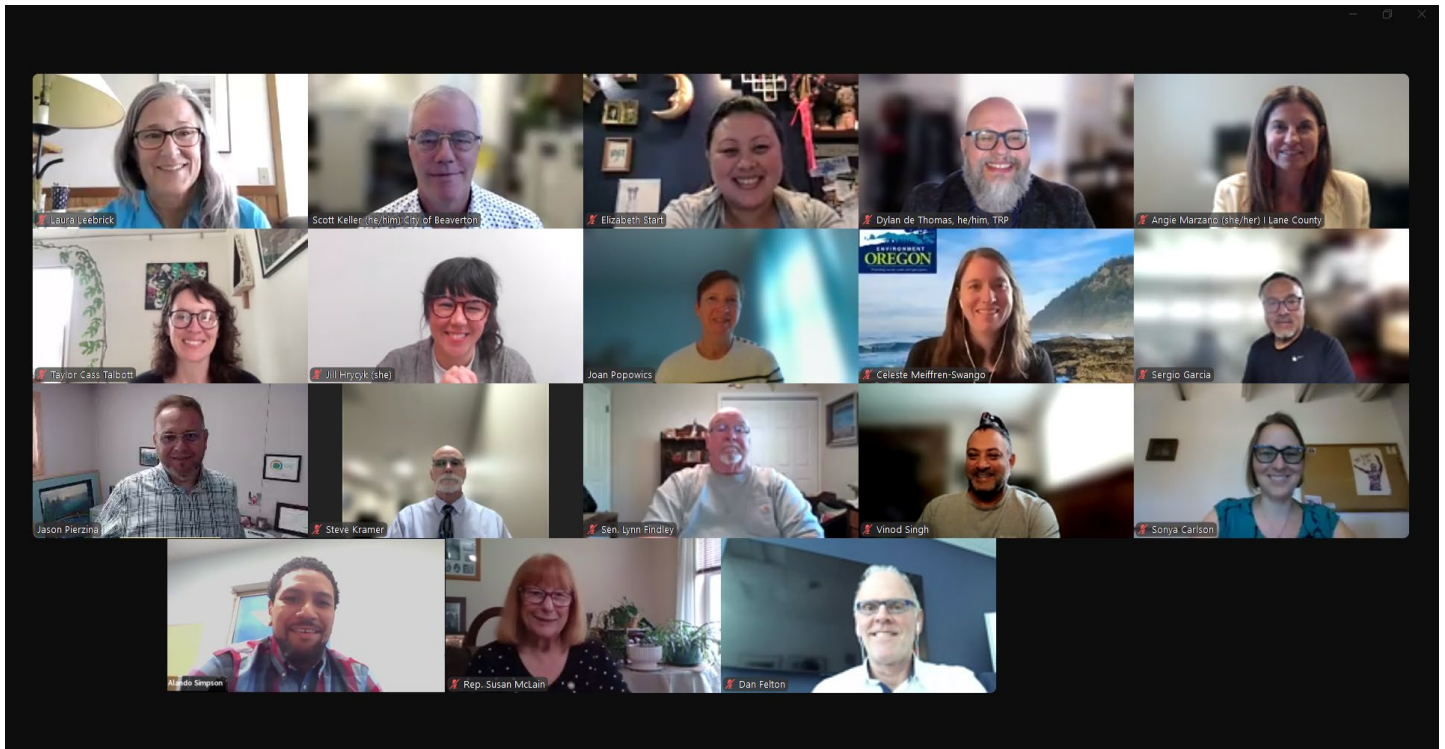


Image: Zoom screenshot of ORSAC members, taken in June 2024

Meetings

The Council’s first and second meetings, in May and August 2022, were summarized in the 2022 report. Since then, the Council has held 12 additional regular meeting and one special meeting as of Sept. 1, 2024. In addition to these full meetings of all Council members, the Council organized a subcommittee process for the review of the first draft of the PRO Plan, discussed in the next section. Those seven subcommittees met a total of 17 times in April, May and June 2024. Not all Council members participated in the subcommittee meetings; however, the work products of the subcommittees were shared with all Council members as part of the development of recommendations to the Producer Responsibility Organization in June 2024. Throughout the development of the draft and final recommendations for the PRO Plan, Council members provided public, verbal disclosures of real, perceived or potential conflicts of interest, in compliance with [State of Oregon ethics guidance](#) for public officials.

Members provided the following feedback regarding the Council’s meetings from October 2022 through August 2024:

- **Improved meeting efficiency** - Agendas and meeting materials sent to members over a week in advance; meeting dates are scheduled well ahead; extended discussion times are provided when needed, including advance requests for longer meeting times to allow for meaningful discussion; and updated Zoom features while still providing translation and interpretation services for equitable language access.

- **Increased engagement on content** - Establishing the sub-committee meeting process for deeper engagement on the PRO Plan elements by priority areas set by the Council; scheduling presentations by the PRO (Circular Action Alliance) on detailed topics; DEQ's responsiveness to requests for presentations on new and complicated topics, like on eco-modulation of fees and responsible end markets; regular check-ins with DEQ staff prior to the meetings, to ensure members have the context and information needed for their participation
- **Nimbleness, flexibility and commitment to timelines** - DEQ's partnership with a new Producer Responsibility Organization to coordinate work, showing flexibility and inclusivity. It's equally important to stay on track with the timeline to effectively deliver an improved, modernized recycling system.

To note, the Council must meet at least quarterly by statute. The current Council prefers to meet more frequently; however, the annual schedule for Council meetings will be reviewed in December 2024 for the coming year. The Council primarily meets virtually, using the Zoom platform, and has hosted two hybrid meetings with some Council members attending in-person and some via Zoom. The Council has expressed interest in at least one hybrid/in-person opportunity each year. Please visit [the Recycling Council webpage](#) to view meeting dates, agendas and supporting materials.

Recommendations and Accomplishments: 2022-2024

[ORS 459A.902\(3\)](#) directs this report to describe any Council recommendations made to DEQ or the Producer Responsibility Organization(s).

On July 5, 2024, the Council delivered its [written recommendations](#) to the PRO, Circular Action Alliance, on draft 1 of the PRO plan, submitted March 31, 2024. The recommendations from that first draft will be reviewed and incorporated into a second draft plan, to be submitted by Circular Action Alliance in late September 2024 and subject to Council review and recommendations in fall 2024.

In addition to the written recommendations described above, the Council has provided consultation to DEQ on:

- [The Uniform Statewide Collection List](#): A list of RMA-covered products to be collected for recycling in all parts of Oregon to provide consistency, rather than varying by municipality.
- [Specifically Identified Materials](#): A list of RMA-covered products that may require enhanced communications activities, additional processing at recycling facilities or other special attention for proper management in the recycling system.

- The process by which a product is considered exempt from the RMA's requirements, and how those exemptions may be updated as the system changes.
- Potential elements to be included in the PRO plan, in addition to statutory requirements.
- Other general policy feedback and advisory consideration for projects related to RMA development and implementation.

What Comes Next?

Much of the Council's work in 2022 through 2024 focused on establishing the foundation for Oregon's modernized recycling system. The transition of the Council into a more comprehensive policy advisory body will begin as Oregon's Plastic Pollution Reduction and Recycling Modernization Act is implemented July 1, 2025. Over the next two years, the Council will continue to provide feedback and recommendations to DEQ on implementation of the RMA. The Council will also complete its final recommendations on the first PRO Plan, to cover RMA implementation in 2025 through 2028, and advise the PRO on its work.

The Council looks forward to engaging with DEQ, the PRO, local governments and their recycling service providers to produce and implement a system that works well for all people in Oregon and the obligated producers of printed paper and packaging.

For more information about the Recycling Council and upcoming meetings, visit the Recycling Council webpage at oregon.gov/deq/recycling/Pages/ORSAC.aspx.