

# Post-consumer plastics recycling overview

## Focus on recycled content requirements

Plastic is a threat to human health, wildlife, and the environment. Washington’s [new plastics reduction law<sup>1</sup>](#), RCW [70A.245](#), requires producers of many common, single-use plastics to include a minimum percentage of recycled material in their products. This policy drives development of new markets for Washington’s recyclable plastic and reduces economic dependence on virgin plastics.

### Recycled content requirements phased in through 2036

The law requires the amount of post-consumer recycled content (PCRC) in each product category to increase over time.

#### 2023

15% PCRC – Most beverage containers and trash bags

#### 2025

15% PCRC – Household cleaning and personal care products in plastic containers

#### 2028

15% PCRC – Dairy containers and wine sold in 187 ml plastic bottles

### Minimum recycled-content phases

Year	Plastic trash bags	Beverage containers*	Household cleaner and personal care	Plastic wine container (187 milliliters)	Dairy milk container
2022					
2023	10 percent	15 percent			
2024					
2025	15 percent		15 percent		
2026		25 percent			
2027	20 percent				
2028			25 percent	15 percent	15 percent
2029					
2030					
2031		50 percent	50 percent	25 percent	25 percent
2032					
2033					
2034					
2035					
2036				50 percent	50 percent

\*Excluding plastic wine and milk containers.

### De minimus plastic producers are exempt from law’s requirements

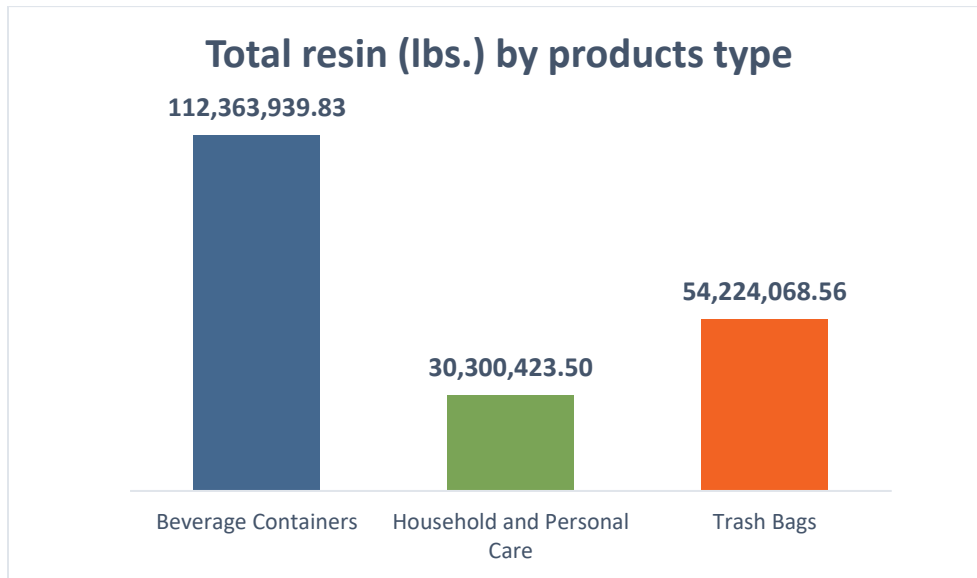
Covered plastic producers must register annually with Ecology, pay fees to cover Ecology’s costs to oversee the PCRC program, and meet the minimum PCRC requirements.

Ecology registered 262 producers registered with Ecology. Of those, 155 met de minimis conditions. De minimis producers either sell less than a million dollars of a single covered product category into Washington or sell less than one ton of a single covered product category into Washington. De minimis producers are not required to meet the minimum PCRC requirements or pay annual fees to Ecology.

<sup>1</sup> <https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=70A.245>

## Small mountain of plastic resin sold in Washington every year

Producers reported in 2021 that a total of 196,888,431.89 pounds of plastic containers and trash bags were sold in Washington. The resin to make those products is the equivalent of about 5.4 billion water bottles. That is enough plastic to cover the Eiffel Tower twice, according to a [2019 Reuters report](#)<sup>2</sup>.



## Next steps and rulemaking

In 2023 covered plastic beverage containers and plastic trash bags must meet the first phase of PCRC standards.

Ecology is conducting rulemaking to provide additional clarity and to outline the processes required but not defined in the law. The rules, including any changes in the interpretation of terms and methods, will take effect in 2024 under WAC 173-925. Rulemaking is informed by stakeholder input, economic analysis, and research by the department. You can learn more about the rulemaking process and opportunities to provide input on the [PCRC rule website](#)<sup>3</sup>. You can also contact the rulemaking lead, Shannon Jones.

### Shannon Jones

Rulemaking Lead

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-environment-plasticbottles-backstory/backstory-mapping-the-worlds-growing-plastic-mountain-one-bottle-at-a-time-idUSKBN1WM0FX>

<sup>3</sup> <https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/Laws-rules-rulemaking/Rulemaking/WAC-173-925>