

Packaging Extended Producer Responsibility Advisory Board

Wednesday, March 18, 2026

Start 1 p.m. - End 2:30 p.m.

[MS Teams](#) | Phone conference ID: 414 815 001# | Call in (audio only) +1 651-395-7448

Meeting Location: Room 100, MPCA St Paul Offices, 520 Lafayette Rd N., St. Paul, MN 55155

If attending in person, RSVP to packaging.mPCA@state.mn.us by noon on Friday, March 13

Agenda

Time	Topic	Speaker	Type	Page
1 p.m.	Call to order Meeting logistics Welcome and roll call / attendance Approve agenda Approve February 18 meeting summary	Chair Reinhardt	Action	2
1:10 p.m.	Updates from MPCA Updates from CAA	MPCA CAA	Information	4
1:20 p.m.	Subcommittee read-out	Chairs of each subcommittee	Information	
1:30 p.m.	Overview of reuse and waste reduction	MPCA CAA Upstream	Information	6
2:30 p.m.	Adjourn			

Packaging EPR Advisory Board

Meeting Summary

Virtual via Microsoft Teams or in-person at the MPCA St. Paul Office | 2 hours

Wednesday, February 18, 2026 | 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. CT

Recording available at: <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/events-and-meetings/packaging-extended-producer-responsibility-advisory-board-meeting-2026-02-18>

Attendance

Board Member Attendance

Present (9 members required for quorum)			Absent
Gabbie Batzko-Conley	Kirk Koudelka	Mac Sellars	Kate Davenport
Sara Bixby	Gregory Melkonian	Jon Steiner	Mike Griffin
Megan Daum	Shoshana Micon	Bill Keegan	Maggie Schuppert
Sydney Harris	Victoria Reinhardt (Chair)	Steve Vrchota	
Miriam Holsinger (Vice Chair)			

Guest Presenters: Kris Coperine, CAA

Agency Staff: Mallory Anderson, Quinn Carr, Molly Flynn, John Gilkeson, Aubrey Sondrol, Colleen Hetzel, Tina Patton, Dave Benke

Participants: Participation from the public was not tracked for this meeting.

Meeting notes

Call to order

Mallory Anderson conducted a roll call vote.

Present: Batzko-Conley, Bixby, Daum, Harris, Holsinger, Keegan, Melkonian, Micon, Reinhardt, Steiner

Absent: Griffin, Davenport, Schuppert, Sellars, Vrchota

Approve agenda

Steiner motioned and Sara seconded. Mallory Anderson conducted a roll call vote.

Yes: Batzko-Conley, Bixby, Daum, Harris, Holsinger, Keegan, Melkonian, Micon, Reinhardt, Sellars, Steiner, Vrchota

No: None

Absent: Davenport, Griffin, Schuppert

Meeting minutes

Keegan motioned and Batzko-Conley seconded. Mallory Anderson conducted a roll call vote.

Yes: Batzko-Conley, Bixby, Daum, Harris, Holsinger, Keegan, Melkonian, Micon, Reinhardt, Sellars, Steiner, Vrchota

Yes:

No: None

Absent: Davenport, Griffin, Schuppert

Agency updates

The Preliminary Assessment has been posted and noticed through the Packaging EPR GovDelivery. The two vacant seats are being filled, offers have been accepted by applicants and the paperwork is in process. Steve Vrchota is retiring and will step-down from the board as of April 1. Surveys are under way for the Needs Assessment and the agency and Eunomia will continue to evaluate best methods for the engagement for this report. Discussion on non-public data and a need for more information on justification of those requests.

There was discussion of a letter submitted by NWRA and requested to be sent to the advisory board. It was determined that the correspondence was most directly related to the agency's work and should remain between the agency and the NWRA.

CAA updates

Reviewing materials related to the Preliminary Assessment and Needs Assessment.

Rule process overview

The official first step of a rulemaking process is a request for comments, which has not yet started for any rulemaking related to the Packaging Waste and Cost Reduction Act. An overview of the rules process in Minnesota along with why rules are undertaken, how the process works in Minnesota, the timeline, and documentation needed to promulgate rules was overviewed by the rule coordinator.

Overview of key aspects of the Packaging Act

An overview of key parts of the Packaging Waste and Cost Reduction Act that require definition or further clarification for the Needs Assessment and therefore input from advisory board were discussed.

Subcommittee conversation

A discussion of a proposal of development of subcommittees to discuss key outcomes to direct the Needs Assessment was had. It was agreed that four subcommittees would be created and an ask that each member participate in at least one subcommittee.

Public comment

Gary Borges, member of public. I've been reading a lot of studies now regarding microplastics and nanoplastics and the more we utilize post consumer recycle by recycle it, recycling it back into materials, especially food packaging is one of my concerns. The more likelihood that microplastics and more to the point nanoplastics are going to migrate into the food systems. Secondly, if we put recycle into other items, it's the more we recycle it, the more the Poly, the Poly chains are being damaged, reduced, shortened, the more likely for microplastics and nanoplastics that will put more microplastics, nanoplastics in the environment, into our streams, into our rivers, into our environment and then into our Biosystems. They're ready finding microplastics in our bodies, our, our biosphere, in our, our brains. And I just think the use of PCR is going to exacerbate that issue. And then lastly, regarding PCR, I've seen in California where two polyester suppliers last year went bankrupt and why did they go bankrupt? Because companies from Asia were selling post consumer recycled polyester specifically into the in the California area. So companies were going bankrupt. In other words, we're getting PCR from Asia, which is even less controlled than if we do it in the United States. So I'm very concerned about PCR at this time.

Notes compiled by: Mallory Anderson

[Minnesota's Packaging Extended Producer Responsibility Advisory Board](#)

Subcommittees

Subcommittees of the Packaging EPR Advisory Board are being coordinated to discuss and provide feedback to the MPCA on key aspects of the Packaging Waste and Cost Reduction Act that must be determined for the completion of the Needs Assessment (due 12/31/2026).

Requested outcomes

The **recycling subcommittee** is requested to:

- Recommended criteria to be used to categorize covered materials as either commingled recyclable or alternative collection programs.
- Methods to identify contamination at a material recovery facility.
- Criteria to evaluate if a market is “robust” and “viable”.
- Key considerations for reimbursement rates associated with collection of recyclables and sorting at MRFs.
- Key considerations for alternative collection programs.

The **composting subcommittee** is requested to:

- Recommended criteria to evaluate covered materials for the commingled compostable materials collection list.
- Paper products identified as not accepted at composting facilities because of the unsafe or unsanitary nature of the paper product.
- Methods to identify and document contamination at a composting facility.
- Criteria to evaluate if a market is “robust” and “viable”.
- Key considerations setting reimbursement rates associated with collection and composting

The **reuse subcommittee** is requested to:

- Key considerations to identify and evaluate products and packaging that are best suited to reuse.
- Key considerations of criteria included in reimbursement rates associated with collection (Minn. Stat. 115A.1455, Subd 4 (b)(1)).
- Recommend criteria to model and apply for reuse rate and return rates.

The **waste reduction subcommittee** is requested to supply key considerations to identify and evaluate products and packaging that are best suited to waste reduction and refill.

Subcommittees may also identify additional topics that they would like to discuss such as education and outreach relating to their topic area or any other aspect of the Needs Assessment.

Potential Timeline

All timing is subject to change or adapt based on feedback by the board, subcommittee chairs, and the consulting team.

Month	What's happening
March	Board meeting (Wednesday, March 18) Kick-off meetings with sub-committees Submit reports for April 15 board packet and meeting (by Monday, March 30)
April	Board meeting (Wednesday, April 15) Additional meetings as needed Submit reports for May 20 board packet and meeting (by Monday, May 4)
May	Session 1 meetings with subcommittees Submit reports for June 17 board packet and meeting (by Monday, June 8) Board meeting (Wednesday, June 17)
June	Session 2 meetings with subcommittees Submit reports for July 15 board packet and meeting (by Monday, July 6) Board meeting (Wednesday, July 15)
July	Session 3 meetings TBD on report submission

Anticipated meetings of each subcommittee:

Kick-off: Reading list, run through scope of the needs assessment, discuss goals and objectives of subcommittee.

Session 1: Talk through with Eunomia key activities being carried out to demonstrate the research and evaluation process. Eunomia will ask key questions for input and align expectations on the analysis being completed for the Needs Assessment.

Session 2: Discuss “levers of change” being modeled to create program scenarios required for the Needs Assessment.

Session 3: Preview key aspects of analysis at a high level.

Reuse and Refill in Packaging EPR

Understanding what qualifies – and what doesn't

Reusable packaging can outcompete single-use packaging across every job creation, environmental, and social benefit metric. Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is a strong policy instrument for scaling reusable packaging and foodware systems, but it's important to include clear definitions to ensure program success. Distinguishing between *returnable reusables* versus *refillables* and understanding which types of systems and activities qualify as reuse or refill is critical.

For more best practices on incorporating reuse and refill into EPR, as well as Deposit Return Systems (DRS), see upstreamolutions.org/reuse-in-epr-and-drs

Reuse in EPR

Returnable Reusable Packaging is designed to be recirculated multiple times **for the same or similar purpose in its original format in a system for reuse**, and is owned by producers or a third party and **returned to producers or a third party after each use**. *In most packaging EPR laws, these systems are simply defined as "reuse."*

Examples of Returnable Reusable Packaging



Returnity®

Returnable Shipping Boxes & Envelopes

Why it counts: explicitly designed for repeated use in e-commerce systems; returned by consumers via a reverse logistics system (e.g., USPS); ultimately delivered back to a producer or third-party and inspected before delivering the next product.



Okapi Reusables

Returnable Coffee Cups

Why it counts: explicitly designed for repeated use at coffee shops and cafes; returned by consumers via return bins at participating locations; collected and professionally cleaned and sanitized by either the participating establishment or a third party provider between each use.



Reposit

Returnable Packaging for Household Goods

Why it counts: explicitly designed for repeated use in retail settings; returned by consumers in store, curbside, at a depot, or via another return pathway; professionally cleaned by a producer or third party reuse provider before recirculation for same or similar product.



Loop®

Returnable Grocery Packaging



Smiling Hill Farm

Returnable Beverage Bottles



Circular Innovation Council

Returnable Food Containers



r.World

Returnable Event Cups

Applicable where foodware is a covered material

Refill in EPR

Refillable Packaging is **owned by consumers** and designed to be **refilled multiple times** for the same or similar purpose in its original format.

Examples of Refillable Packaging



Wonderfill®

Grocery Packaging

"Refill on the go"

Why it counts: Customers refill their branded refillable container at a designated station in-store. In this case, Dr. Bronner's is the producer and their branded refillable container is the refillable packaging. The system for refills is the in-store refill machine — even better if they provide a discount or other incentive for refilling.



Blueland®

Household Goods Packaging

"Refill at home"

Why it counts: The producer creates a system wherein the refillable package is explicitly designed and marketed for refill-at-home, and refills are sold as concentrates in-store or via a subscription model, making it convenient and easy for consumers to keep refilling the dispenser with the same product. **Note:** single-use packaging associated with the concentrate refills does **not** count as refillable.

The "parent/child" model: "Parent/child" terminology is often used to describe refill-at-home systems. The consumer makes a one-time purchase of refillable packaging, like a spray bottle — the "parent" — which is then filled with a "child" product, like a soap concentrate. While the "parent" packaging is refillable, the "child" packaging is usually single-use and should not be credited as refillable.

What is NOT Reuse



Andela Products

Crushed Glass and Other "Beneficial Reuse"

For landfill cover, landscaping, construction, asphalt, etc.

This involves a **change in form** and the secondary use is not the **same or similar purpose** as the original packaging or foodware.



Consumer Repurposing

These items are not part of a **system** and may not be used for the **same or similar purpose**.



Recycling

It's not reuse unless there's **no change in form**. "Reusing materials" is not the same as a reuse system.



Resealable Packaging

This is not part of a **system for reuse** and is **not reused after the product is consumed**.



Stasher®

Reusable Consumer Products

These are **products, not packaging**. Packaging EPR typically only covers the packaging, not the product itself. Familiar reusable products include BYO shopping bags, water bottles, and coffee mugs.



Long-term Storage Containers

Durable packaging intended for **long-term storage of 5 or more years** is almost always exempt from packaging EPR laws.