

New Report Provides State-by-State Comparison of Recycling Rates for Food-Packaging Materials in the United States

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A state-by-state comparison of recycling rates for a common set of containers and packaging materials (CCPM) in the U.S. is provided in a recently released [report](#) commissioned by the Ball Corporation. The report ranks U.S. states based on overall and material-specific recycling rates using data from 2018 provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, state governments, local jurisdictions, sorting facilities, and material processors. The CCPM analyzed included plastics, cardboard and boxboard, glass bottles and jars, aluminum cans, and steel cans.

The report identifies Maine (72%), Vermont (62%), Massachusetts (55%), Oregon (55%), and Connecticut (52%) as the states with the best overall recycling rates for CCPM when cardboard is excluded from the analysis. The states with the best overall recycling rates for all CCPM (including cardboard) were Maine (74%), Oregon (66%), Connecticut (63%), Vermont (62%), and Iowa (62%).

The authors of the study point out that every state has different policies, different levels of access, and different infrastructure when it comes to recycling, which makes it difficult to drive comprehensive and meaningful change. However, the report notes that increased rates of recycling correlated with states having comprehensive up-to-date data on recycling and state managed reporting systems in place.

The stated purpose of the analysis was “to establish a 2018 baseline from which policy makers, service providers, operators, and investors can make informed strategic decisions on what measures are needed in the short, medium, and long term to support a circular economy, replace primary with secondary materials, and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.”

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