

Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI) is North America's top authority on compostable materials, with 600+ companies holding certifications and 32,000+ certified products globally. BPI advocates for a circular economy by promoting the development and proper disposal of products designed to fully biodegrade in specific environments.

## Why compost?

Landfilled food generates 58% of the fugitive methane from municipal solid waste landfills. **Composting food waste helps avoid methane emissions and creates nutrient-rich compost that improves soil**, but we lack universal compost collection and processing infrastructure to fully realize these benefits.

## Why EPR?

**Well-designed EPR programs provide stable funding for recycling and composting systems** by placing fees on packaging, supporting widespread access for households.

BPI, in partnership with the U.S. Composting Council, has developed comprehensive policy principles for effective EPR programs. For details, see the [EPR Guiding Principles document](#). Consult the table below to review challenges and solutions for overcoming specific barriers to successful implementation:

### Challenges

1.

**Inadequate composting infrastructure** limits effective organic waste diversion and recycling efforts.



2.

**Higher cost for compostable products** can hinder widespread adoption and achieving regional sustainability goals.

3.

**Compostable products must be treated uniquely**, as they are ideal for diverting food waste from landfills and turning it into soil-enriching compost.

4.

**Contamination from non-compostable plastics** disrupts composting processes and undermines the ability of compost operators to determine if a product is compostable vs. recyclable.



### Solutions

**To avoid limiting effective organic waste diversion and recycling efforts**, EPR programs should incorporate composting programs into needs assessments and help fund commercial and community operations, with curbside collection that accepts and processes compostable products. Additionally, advisory board seats should be allocated to composters and certified compostable product producers to ensure their perspectives are represented.

*Municipal compost programs collecting food scraps grew from 8% to 12% between 2021 and 2023.*



**To address the challenge of higher costs hindering adoption and regional sustainability goals**, EPR fees should incentivize switching from non-recyclable food contact packaging to a compostable alternative.

**To maximize the benefits of compostable products for food contact and environmental health**, compostable packaging must be exempt from source reduction requirements and recycled content minimums since it is fundamentally different from recycling, and we need expanded use to facilitate commercial and home food scraps composting.

**To address composting contamination**, EPR funding should prioritize public education and work alongside clear labeling mandates to distinguish traditional plastics from certified compostable products, helping to produce clean compost free from microplastics. In addition to fees on compostable packaging, fees on trash-bound items associated with food should support composting.

*States like Colorado and Washington already require specific terminology, symbol, and color usage to designate compostability.*