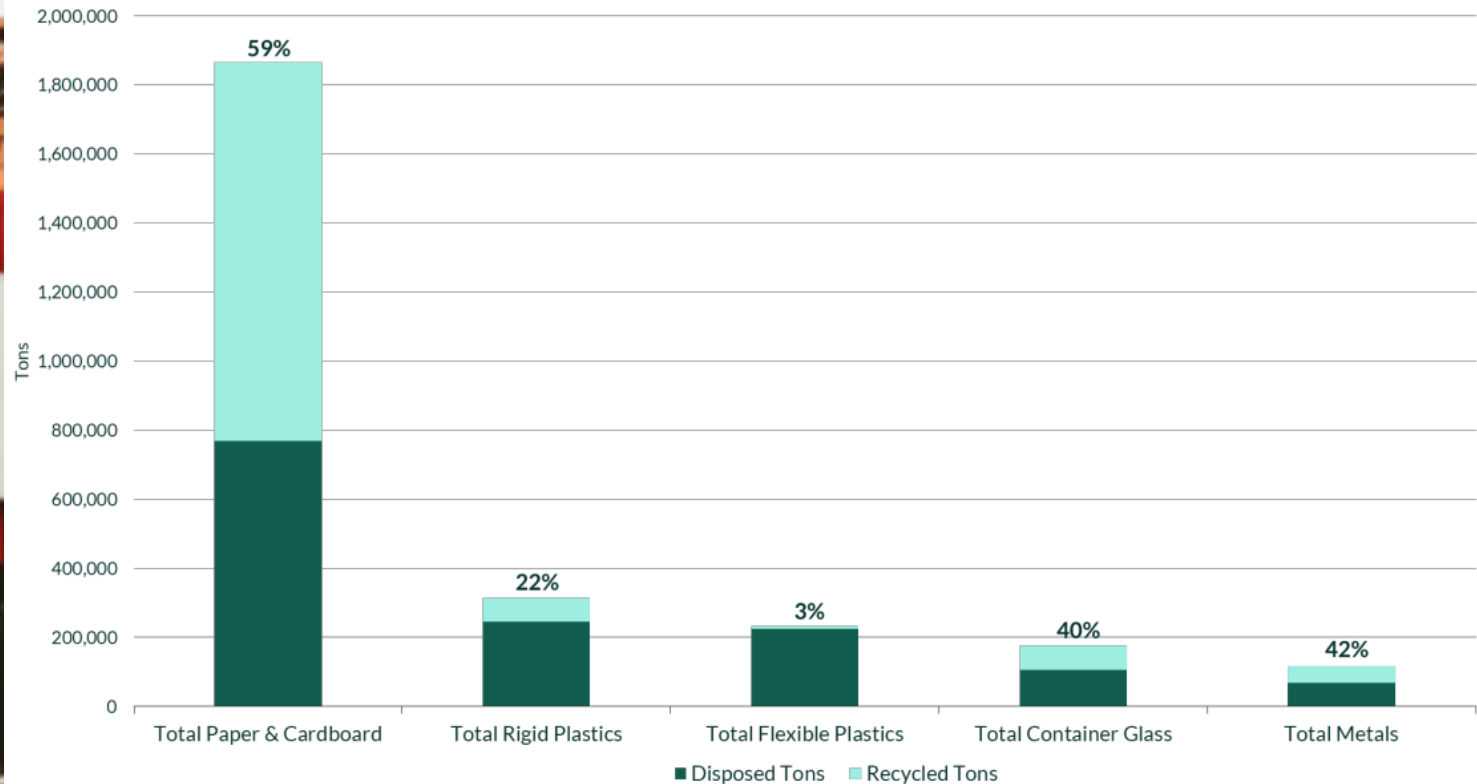


# **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)**

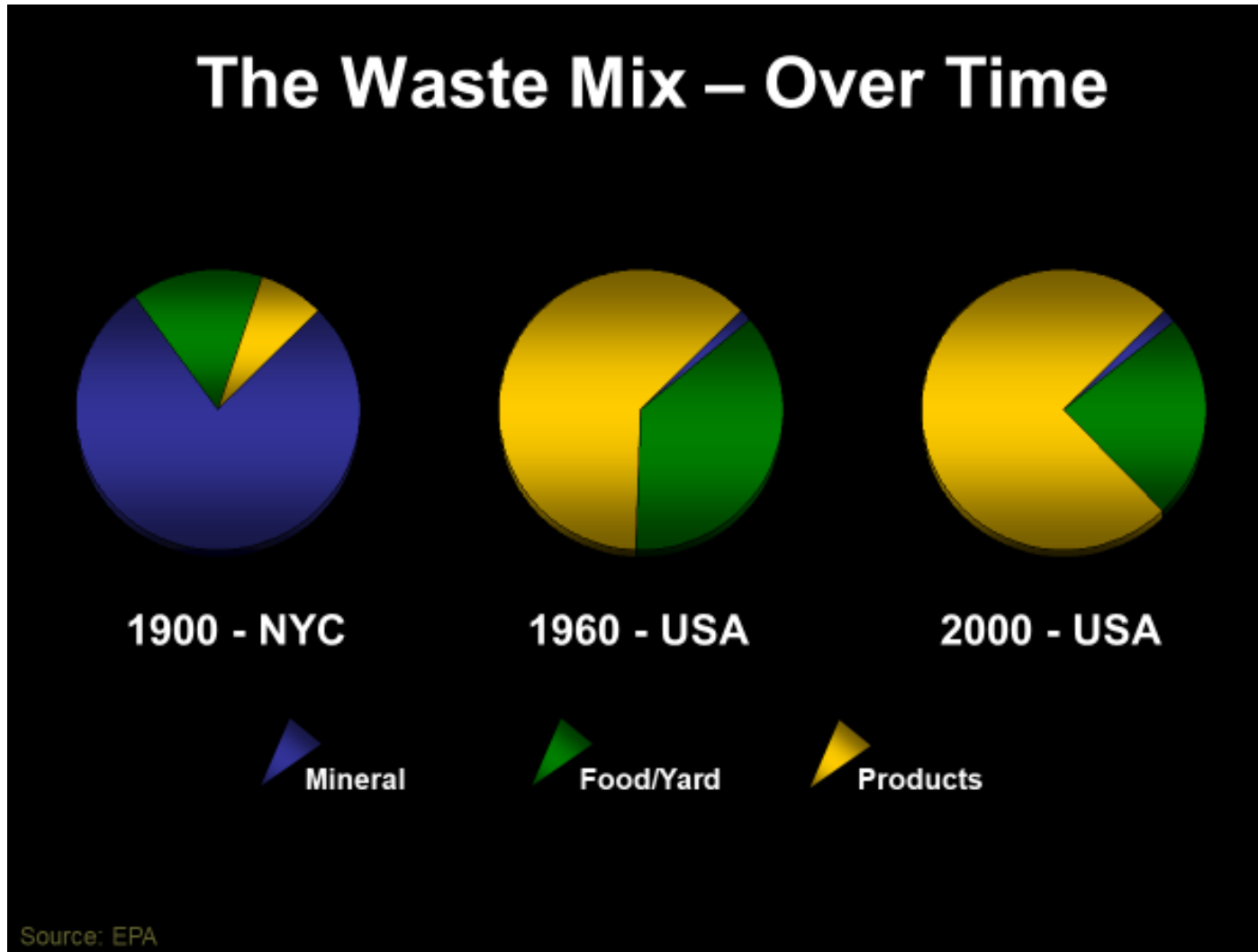
WSAC County Leaders Conference | November 15, 2023

# The Problem: More than half of packaging & paper products are going to landfill in WA



[Dept. of Ecology (2023) Washington Consumer Packaging and Paper Study: Recycling Rate Assessment and Recommendations]

# Context: Consumption and waste have changed

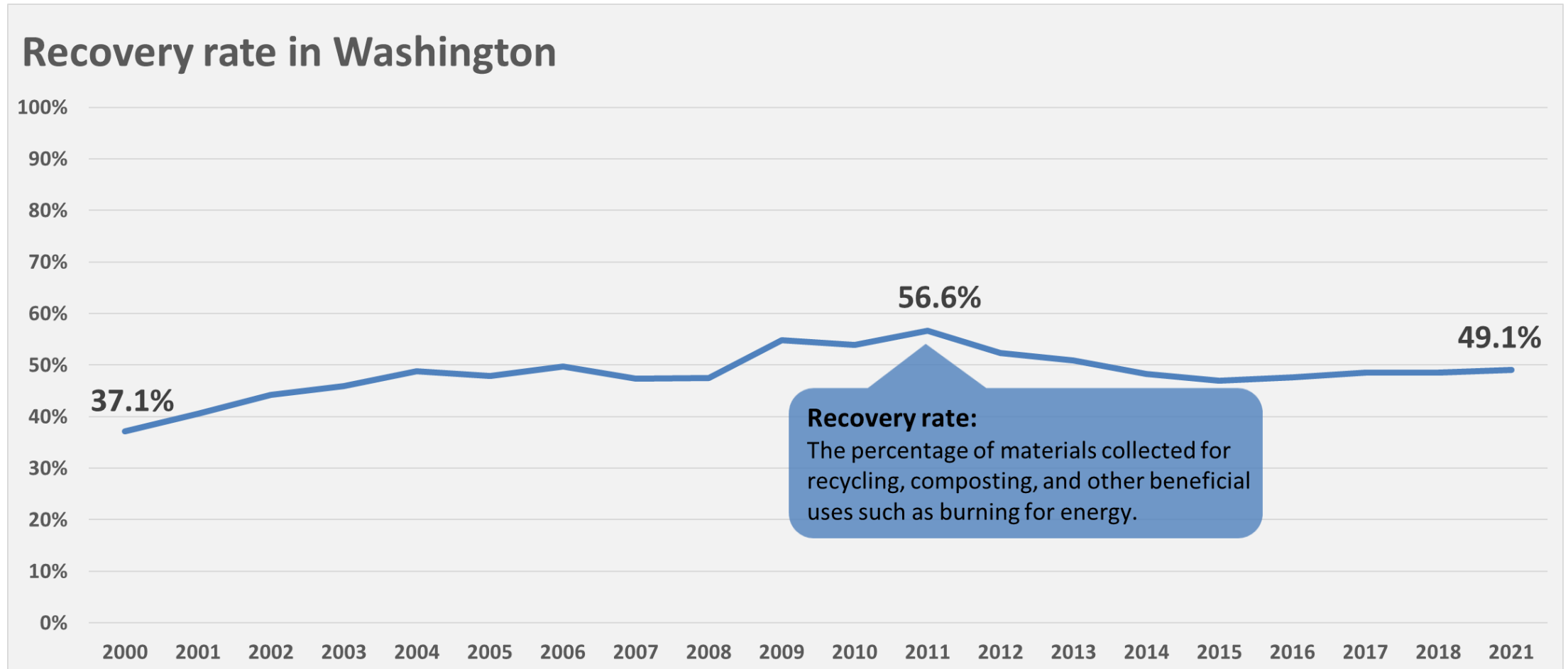


## Today



# We have come a long way with recycling

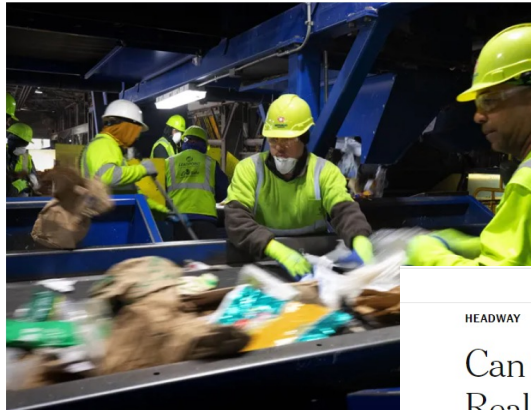
- 1989: The Waste Not Washington Act: State goal to achieve a 50% recycling rate by 1995



# Views on recycling:

## With recycling's dirty truths exposed, Washington works toward a cleaner, more sustainable system

April 26, 2020 at 7:00 am | Updated April 26, 2020 at 10:49 am



### The Myth of Plastic Recycling

December 12, 2022 - 12:10 AM ET

By Laura Sullivan, Emily Kwong, Rebecca Ramirez



Plastic covers the ground in a neighborhood in Indonesia. The country has battled the dumping of U.S. plastic recycling waste across its once pristine islands and waterways.

Laura Sullivan/NPR

INVESTIGATIONS

## Recycling plastic is practically impossible — and the problem is getting worse

October 24, 2022 - 6:31 PM ET  
Heard on All Things Considered

Laura Sullivan



The New York Times

HEADWAY

## Can Plastic Recycling Ever Really Work?

Many plastics that carry the “chasing arrows” symbol, like soda cups and yogurt tubs, are rarely recycled. A new California law is raising the bar.

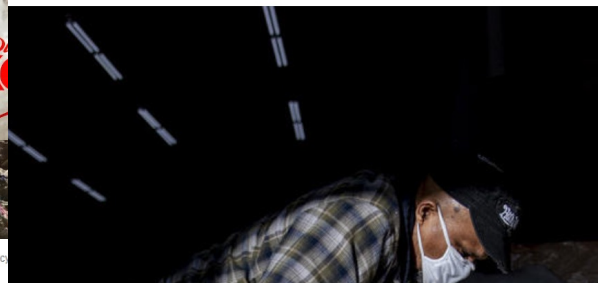
OPINION

Share full

## What it takes to recycle foam blocks in Seattle

A city proud of its sustainability should be ashamed of how many tons of the stuff end up in the landfill every year.

by Samantha Allen / March 5, 2021



## Recent survey of WA residents:

- 76% rate recycling as “very important” or “important” to them personally.
- 86% agree that everyone in Washington should have access to convenient recycling options.
- 86% agree that reducing waste is important.
- 82% agree that everyone in Washington should be able to recycle the same items, regardless of where they live.
- 78% agree that recycling should be free for everyone in Washington.

[Dept. of Ecology (2023) Recycling, Reuse, and Source Reduction Target Study and Community Input Process - DRAFT]

# EPR has worked well in WA



## 2006: The Electronic Recycling Act

Program launched in 2009

14.6 million tons of televisions, computers, laptops and tablets collected in 2021



## 2010: Mercury-Containing Lighting Recycling Act

Program launched in 2015

551,673 lbs. of compact fluorescent lights collected in 2021



## 2017: Medicine Stewardship Law

Program started in 2020

175,050 lbs. of unused drugs collected in 2022



## 2019: Paint Stewardship Law

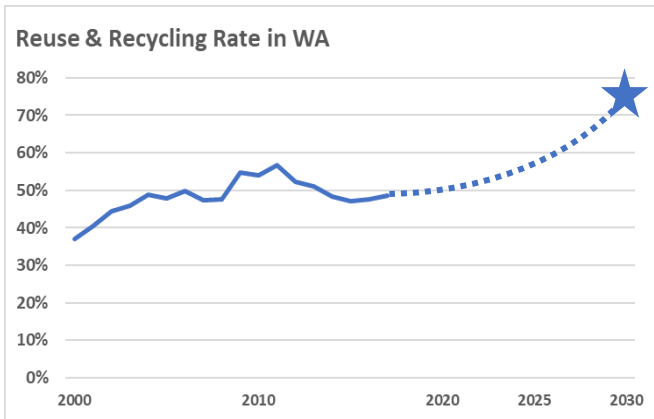
Program started in 2021

864,906 gallons of leftover paint collected in 2021

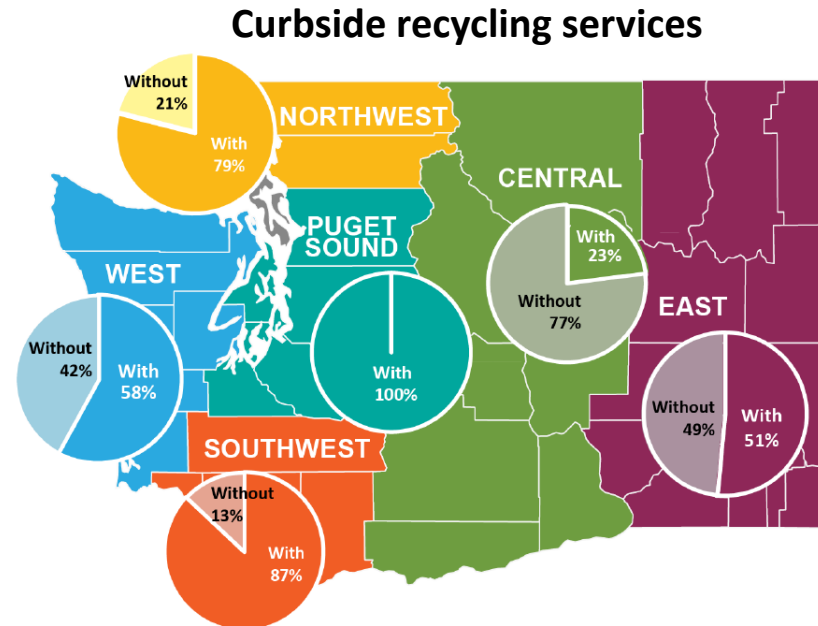
# What do we want from EPR?

- System performance outcomes

## Increased reuse and recycling



## Universal and convenient recycling services for all



## Responsible recycling

*(materials must be sent to verified end markets that meet certain environmental, labor, health and safety standards)*



# Bill History

- **China National Sword**
- **2019 Act relating to the responsible management of plastic (SB 5397 / HB 1204)**
  - 2020 Plastic Packaging Study: The three primary recommendations were:
    1. **Extended Producer Responsibility Policy Framework for All Consumer Packaging and Paper**
    2. **Deposit Return System for All Beverage Containers**
    3. **Recycled Content Requirements for All Plastic Packaging**
- **2021 Act relating to the management of certain materials to support recycling and waste and litter reduction (SB 5022)**
  - **2021 Plastics Law:** recycled content requirements, single-use serviceware on request only, banning some expanded polystyrene products, removed “chasing arrows” requirement, etc.
- **2022 Act relating to renewing Washington's recycling system and reducing waste (SB 5697) aka **RENEW Act****
- **2023 Act relating to improving Washington's solid waste management outcomes (HB 1131 / SB 5154) aka **WRAP Act****



# A Producer Responsibility Program for Paper and Packaging Will:



Fund and modernize the current recycling system, building on our existing infrastructure



Save local governments and residents money, by covering the cost of recycling services



Create one clear common list of what can be recycled statewide and potentially establish a beverage container deposit system



Provide recycling collection to all households that receive garbage service, including those living in apartment buildings and rural areas



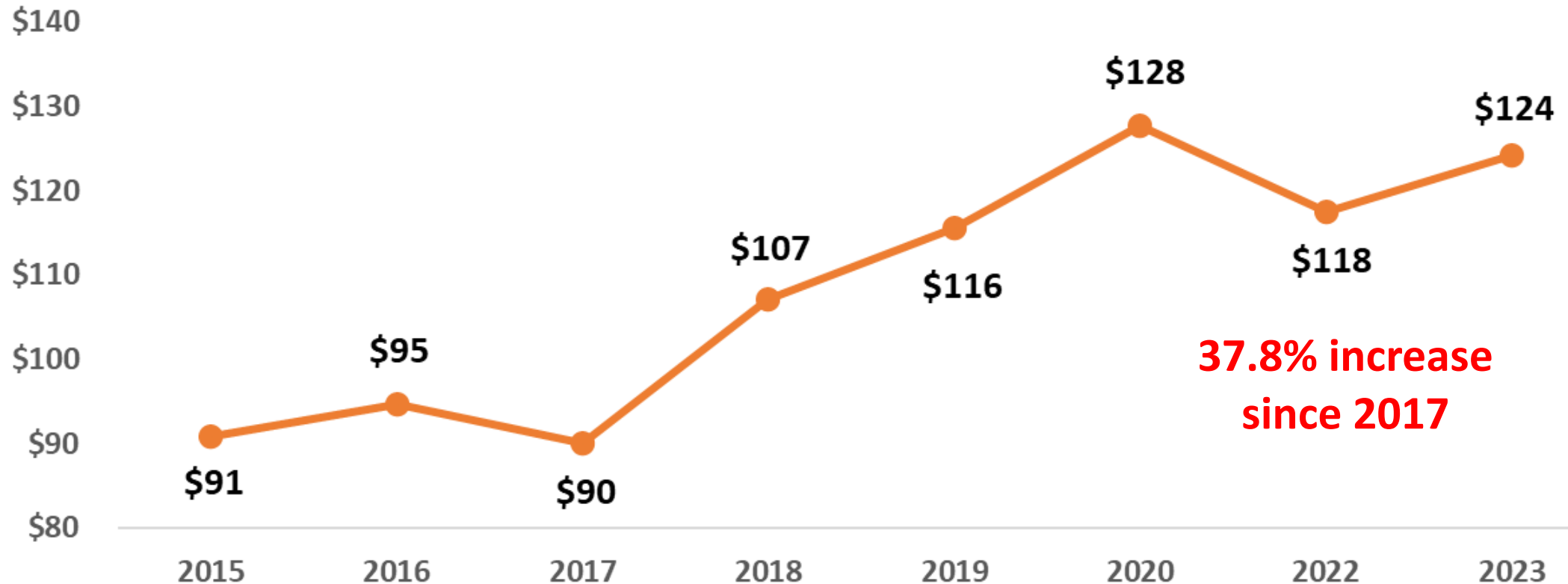
Increase transparency and safeguards to ensure materials are responsibly recycled



Maintain local governments authority to provide recycling services while getting reimbursed for their costs

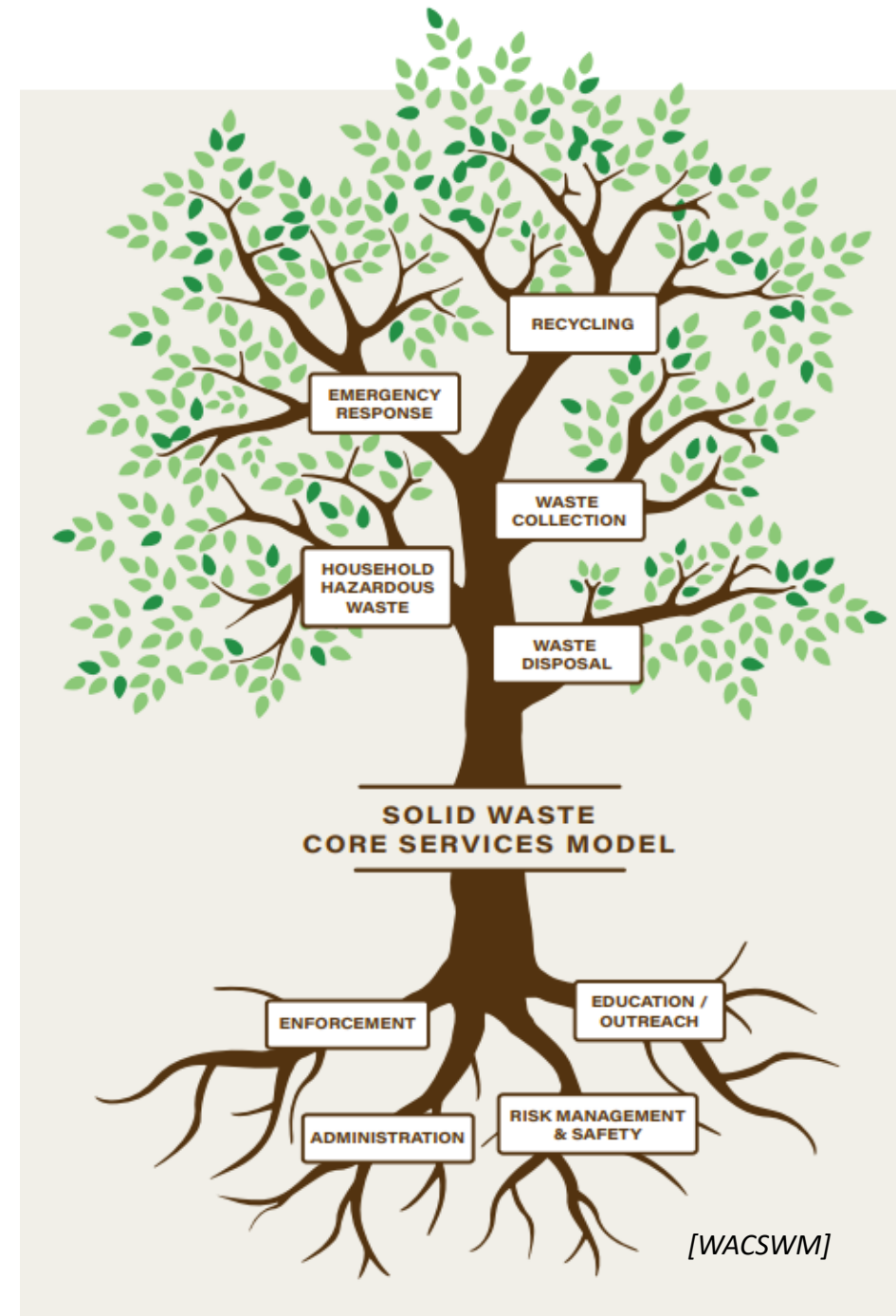
# Residents are experiencing rising costs

## Average Annual Cost to Residents for Recycling Service in UTC-Regulated Areas



# Costs to Counties

- Landfills are filling up – need to find new capacity.
- To provide core solid waste programs and services such as garbage collection and disposal, recycling and household hazardous waste collection in every county and available to most residents, there is a need for increased funding:
  - Equivalent to raising the tipping fee by an estimated \$19 - \$22 per ton.
  - Funding needs are higher in rural counties and the Central region.
- EPR would could fund recycling costs and divert valuable materials from landfill.
- *Without EPR, the costs of recycling and disposal are expected to increase, which will result in greater costs to local governments and residents or services being reduced or dropped.*



# WRAP Act updates

- **Separating the Deposit Return System (DRS)** for beverage containers aka “Bottle Bill”
- **Working with WRRRA** to maintain local governments’ control, use of existing service providers and infrastructure, and how statewide program plans are developed
- **Producer definitions** – related to retailers’ own brands

# Imagine, what if recycling in WA...

- ...was convenient and available to all residents and communities.
- ...came at no cost to local government or residents.
- ...could be trusted so that materials actually got recycled.



# Next Steps

- Meeting with stakeholders
- Draft bill expected end November
- Recycling, Reuse, and Source Reduction Target Study and Community Input Process – Recommendations to the Legislature
- Dec. 5, 2023: House Environment & Energy Committee Work Session
- Jan. 8, 2024: Session start

## Northwest Product Stewardship Council (NWPSC)

- Study on grocery prices and producer fees
- Analysis of the cost impact on counties
- NWPSC hosting information events