

# **Federal Regulations for Extended Producer Responsibility**

## **Draft Prepared by the Environmental Protection Agency**

### **Preamble**

The United States ranks as one of the highest producers of plastic waste per capita in the world. Of the 31,000,000 tons of plastic waste generated in the United States each year, only 8 percent is recycled.

The burden of developing recycling programs and disposing of plastic waste currently rests with state, county, and municipal governments. But the rising costs and logistical difficulties of plastic-waste disposal are challenges many governing bodies struggle to meet. Plastic waste can no longer be treated as a local government problem. It must be addressed at a federal level, and responsibility must extend to all involved parties. This Regulation therefore seeks to create a national program of stewardship to address the growing problem of plastic waste.

Stewardship, or the responsible management of the environment and its natural resources, requires collective effort and responsibility on the part of all interested parties. We must ensure that the products we manufacture, use, reuse, and dispose of have a minimum impact on the environment.

### **Regulation Requirements**

- Producers must plan for product disposal at the time of production, arranging for collection and recycling or fuel recovery.
- Producers must develop systems, plans, and infrastructure to ensure appropriate disposal of all plastic materials. They must also educate the public on recovery systems.
- Educational programs should encourage the public to reduce, reuse, and recycle plastics.
- Producers must finance the development and implementation of collection and recycling programs and end-of-life management costs.
- Producers must prioritize reduction and reuse over recycling and incineration.
- The federal government should provide incentives to encourage innovation in recycling methods, fuel recovery, and biodegradable plastics.
- Any waste that is not recycled or reused must be otherwise disposed of in a manner consistent with environmental and human health and safety.