

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Brief

Why It Matters

Packaging is essential to the safe and efficient movement of fresh produce. It helps prevent food loss and waste, supports traceability and labeling requirements, and protects product quality in a highly perishable supply chain. State Extended Producer Responsibility policies can create added costs and operational burdens that reduce access to fresh foods and increase pressure on growers, distributors, retailers, and consumers.

Quick Facts

- Packaging helps extend shelf life, reduce spoilage, and support safe handling of fresh produce.
- Fresh produce supply chains operate on thin margins and are especially sensitive to added packaging costs.
- EPR laws can create a patchwork of state requirements that complicates interstate commerce and supply chain compliance.
- Policies that discourage functional packaging can unintentionally increase food waste and raise food prices.

Background

IFPA supports practical environmental policy and recognizes the importance of recycling, composting, and circular economy goals. At the same time, packaging for fresh produce must be evaluated differently from other consumer goods because it plays a direct role in food safety, federal labeling compliance, traceability, quality protection, and food access. State by state EPR laws can create uneven obligations that disrupt efficient national distribution systems.

IFPA Priorities

- Protect packaging formats that are known to reduce food loss and waste for fresh produce.
- Ensure EPR requirements do not conflict with federal food safety, traceability, and labeling obligations.
- Minimize state by state fragmentation that creates unnecessary burdens on interstate commerce.
- Support investment friendly frameworks that encourage innovation in sustainable packaging.

Why Congress Should Care

- Fresh produce packaging policy affects food affordability, food waste, and access to nutritious foods.
- Fragmented state requirements can disrupt interstate commerce and create uncertainty for businesses operating across multiple states.
- Packaging policy should account for public health, food security, and supply chain resilience, not only waste reduction goals.

