

Testimony in OPPOSITION
to
House Bill 1533
in
Colorado House Energy and Environment Committee
on
April 7, 2022

The Flexible Packaging Association (FPA) is submitting testimony in **opposition to HB 1355**, “Concerning the Creation of the Producer Responsibility Program for Statewide Recycling,” which creates a producer responsibility program to provide recycling services to covered entities in the state. The program will be implemented by a nonprofit organization in consultation with a newly-created advisory board and overseen by the Department of Public Health and Environment.

I am Sam Schlaich, Counsel, Government Affairs of FPA, which represents flexible packaging manufacturers and suppliers to the industry in the U.S. Flexible packaging represents over \$34 billion in annual sales; is the second-largest and fastest-growing segment of the packaging industry; and employs approximately 79,000 workers in the United States. Flexible packaging is produced from paper, plastic, film, aluminum foil, or any combination of these materials, and includes bags, pouches, labels, liners, wraps, rollstock, and other flexible products.

These are products that you and I use every day – including hermetically sealed food and beverage products such as cereal, bread, frozen meals, infant formula, and juice; as well as sterile health and beauty items and pharmaceuticals, such as aspirin, shampoo, feminine hygiene products, and disinfecting wipes. Even packaging for pet food uses flexible packaging to deliver fresh and healthy meals to a variety of animals. Flexible packaging is also used for medical device packaging to ensure that the products packaged, diagnostic tests, IV solutions and sets, syringes, catheters, intubation tubes, isolation gowns, and other personal protective equipment maintain their sterility and efficacy at the time of use. Trash and medical waste receptacles use can liners to manage business, institutional, medical, and household waste. Carry-out and take-out food containers and e-commerce delivery, which have become increasingly important during the pandemic, are also heavily supported by the flexible packaging industry.

Thus, FPA and its members are particularly interested in solving the plastic pollution issue, increasing the recycling of solid waste from packaging, and creating a working, circular economy. Unfortunately, we find that HB 1355, in its current form, is premature and needs to be further developed before moving forward.

Flexible packaging is in a unique situation as it is one of the most environmentally sustainable packaging types from a water and energy consumption, product-to-package ratio, transportation efficiency, food waste, and greenhouse gas emissions reduction standpoint, but circularity options are limited. There is no single solution that can be applied to all communities when it comes to the best way to collect, sort, and process flexible packaging waste. FPA believes that a suite of options is needed to address the lack of infrastructure for non-readily recyclable packaging materials, and promotion and support of market development for recycled products is an important lever to build that infrastructure.

We also believe that EPR can be used to promote this needed shift in recycling in the U.S. In fact, FPA worked with the Product Stewardship Institute (PSI) and have jointly drafted a set of principles to guide EPR for flexible packaging (<https://www.flexpack.org/end-of-packaging-life>). This dialogue, which looked at the problems and opportunities for EPR to address the needs of the flexible packaging industry to reach full circularity for over a year. It is with this background that FPA provides this testimony to improve HB1355, so that it provides the necessary elements for the improvement of collection and infrastructure investment and development of advanced recycling systems to allow for collection and recycling to a broader array of today's packaging materials, including flexible packaging; and quality sorting and markets for currently difficult-to-recycle materials.

While well-intentioned, HB 1355 is underdeveloped as currently written and FPA must respectfully **oppose** **HB 1355**, but stands ready to assist in creating a measure that comports with the PSI/FPA elements and supports a meaningful EPR program for packaging; providing the necessary investment in new infrastructure and markets for all packaging, including flexible packaging, and addresses the evolving needs and concerns of Colorado.

In advance, thank you for your consideration. If we can provide further information or answer any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 410-694-0800 or SSchlaich@Flexpack.org.

Respectfully,

Sam Schlaich

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