



Request for R&D Submission for Container & Bottle Suppliers

A new kind of bottle or container, which is recyclable and/or reusable or refillable, and uses minimal virgin plastic or noplactic at all, that helps retailers meet their private label source reduction goals.

To support retailers' efforts to scale sustainable containers and bottles, GreenBlue's Sustainable Packaging Coalition is issuing a request for submissions from bottle and container suppliers. Suppliers can submit proposed formats that meet the requirements outlined in this brief by July 10, 2026 to be considered for presentation to SPC retailers and members.

Issued by: Sustainable Packaging Coalition

Issued on: April 23, 2026

Response due date: July 10, 2026

Contact: Olga Kachook, olga.kachook@greenblue.org

Antitrust & Confidentiality Notice:

All work and submissions are governed by SPC's antitrust policy, and prohibits discussion or exchange of prices, costs, volumes, margins, future commercial strategy, or customer allocation.

Product Parameters: Overview

GreenBlue is on a mission to accelerate the transition to a regenerative, just, and sustainable materials economy. As part of this mission, GreenBlue's Sustainable Packaging Coalition leads a Retailer Forum to solve a shared private-label sustainable packaging challenge for retailer members. This work is driven in large part by regulatory requirements and EPR incentives across states, customer preferences and awareness of plastic waste, and corporate packaging and carbon goals.

Problem Statement

The SPC is working to improve circularity across the entire materials economy, including tackling challenges to circularity like those facing plastic packaging across the board. One specific problem area that has been identified by Retailer Members is the imperative to transition to sustainable^[1] containers, bottles and closures, that expressly support source reduction goals, as there is a predominance of rigid plastics in this category of consumer packaging. Retail Private Brands have a unique challenge in that they rely on external supply partners to provide packaging solutions at scale in a system they do not own. To support retailers' goal of transitioning to sustainable containers and bottles, the SPC is issuing a Request for R&D Submission that satisfies the requirements listed in this brief.

Example Applications

Below is a non-exhaustive list of example applications for reference:

- Beverage Bottles
- Personal Care Bottles and Containers (Shampoo, Hair Care, Lotions, etc.)
- Pharmaceutical Bottles and Containers
- Home Care Bottles and Containers (Cleaning products, Air care, etc.)
- Any caps, dispensing types, pumps, sprays or other closures are a part of this consideration set. Innovation in these areas are welcome.

Compostability Statement

Please note that because of the nature of product that the bottles and/or containers could contain, compostability is not a suitable end-of-life for these materials. Recyclability is required in this case.

Recyclability Guidelines and Certifications

Packaging is **recyclable** if it can be collected, sorted, reprocessed, and ultimately reused in manufacturing or making another item. A package is only considered recyclable if there is a substantial likelihood that it can do all of those things in the majority of communities where an item is sold.^[2] Consider that among the most recycled and recyclable rigid plastics for containers and bottles are PET and HDPE, with PP starting to gain traction in some markets. Other material types must have a solid solution toward end-of-use and circularity.

To this end, for any “recyclable” positioning or label recommendations, suppliers must provide a Recyclability Evidence Data Profile demonstrating:

- Alignment with How2Recycle’s recyclability assessment pillars:
 - Collection access (where/how consumers can return material)
 - Sortation feasibility at MRFs (or retail takeback logistics)
 - Reprocessing compatibility (APR for Rigid; mill/repulpability for paper)
 - End-market demand (e.g., offtake LOIs).
- Paper and other alternative materials (beyond petroleum-based plastics) will be considered if they are scalable and competitive in price to current standards
- The container or bottle must run on existing assets and machines, or with minimal changes across:
 - Minimal impact on current line speed
 - No increase in changeover time
 - Seal quality within current spec windows
- Meet requirements as set forth by [SB 343](#) in California, including:
 - Labelling restrictions apply to products manufactured after October 4, 2026, the current compliance deadline
 - Any on-pack or marketing claim must be vetted for compliance (and aligned to FTC Green Guides)
 - Suppliers must provide documentation supporting recyclability claims (e.g. data on collection, sortation, reprocessing, end-markets)
- Designs should anticipate and comply with California [SB 54](#) EPR requirements that ramp up towards a ≥30% plastic recycling rate by 2028
- Designs should also fit within [California’s Covered Material categories](#) as a material qualification
- The container or bottle also must follow these guidelines, based on material type:
 - Plastics: [APR Design Guidelines for PET Rigid](#); [APR Design Guidelines for HDPE Natural](#); [APR Design Guidelines for HDPE Colored](#); [APR Design Guidelines for PP Natural](#); [APR Design Guidelines for PP Colored](#), and [RecyClass Design for Recycling](#)

- If plastic, the new solution should follow guidance from SPC's [Guide to Recycled Plastics for Packaging, Part 1](#), [Guide to Recycled Plastics: Part 2](#), [Guide to Recycled Plastics: Part 3](#), [The Recycled Content Opportunity](#), [A Primer on Recycled Plastic Packaging](#), and [Introduction to End Markets for Hard-to-Recycle Plastics](#).
- Paper/Fiber: [American Forest & Paper Association \(AF&PA\) compatibility with mills](#)
 - As part of submission, provide third-party repulpability/recyclability test results (e.g., Western Michigan University certifications) when applicable
- Metals: [Steel Container Design Guide for Recyclability](#); [An Aluminum Container Design Guide](#)
- Reuse: [Framework for Scaling Reuse](#)
- All Packaging assessment: [The Recyclability Assessment Methodology \(RAM\)](#).
- The container must meet requirements set forth by [How2Recycle Guide to Recyclability](#), understanding the way these items are assessed via the [Overall Recyclability Assessment for Core and Challenged Formats](#)

Additional design parameters include:

- Using non-hazardous base materials and additives
- Minimizing the number of unique materials in a package
- Avoiding materials or components that could interfere with recycling
- Ensuring recyclability, in that the container passes through local/typical collection and sortation infrastructure
- Sortation feasibility with priority for compatibility with existing sortation technology at MRFs, as robotic sorting equipment paired with artificial intelligence and digital watermarking is not yet widely available

Submission Instructions

A successful submission is a tangible bottle/container packaging concept which can be converted and submitted to further testing by MRFs and third parties that satisfies the goals, considerations, and parameters described above. **Submissions are due via email to Olga Kachook: olga.kachook@greenblue.org by 5 pm ET on July 10, 2026.**

All submissions must be sent as a SINGLE, multi-page PDF document that includes:

1. **One statement summary**. Sample statement is provided on the last page of this brief. This should be the first page of the entry, after company introductions.
2. **Recyclability Evidence Dossier**:
 - a. APR Design® Guide compliance summary (plastics), or AF&PA/WMU repulpability (paper), or equivalent compliance document for other materials, like metal or bio-based options.
 - b. APR Critical Guidance or equivalent third-party test report for Rigid Containers or Bottles (if applicable).
 - c. Sortation test evidence (bench/MRF demo or partner letter).
 - d. End-market evidence (e.g., processor letter/LOI).
3. **Operational Readiness Pack (Expectation that trials have been done)**: machinability window, sealing range, COF, OTR/MVTR, line-speed delta, ISTA transit test plan aligned to channel (e-comm vs. DC/store).
4. **Claims & Labeling Plan**: draft on-pack/marketing language + legal substantiation checklist (H2R/FTC/SB 343 alignment).

If you are planning to submit more than one material or innovation, please treat them as separate entries, with a separate multi-page PDF document for each.

Timeline

April 23, 2026	Brief is made available
July 10, 2026	Deadline for suppliers to submissions
August 2026	Narrow respondents, request additional information
September 28-29, 2026	Individual meetings with retailers to discuss winning concepts at SPC Advance 2026 in San Diego

Example rubric

Submissions will be assessed using the following submission criteria, which is subject to change.

Supplier Name: Name and Info here					
Criteria	Description	Weight (%)	Score (1-5)	Weighted Score	
Recyclability evidence	APR/AF&PA/WMU proof, access & acceptance, end-market LOIs	10		0	
Operational fit	Machinability, no CAPEX/minimal change, ISTA plan	20		0	
Regulatory/claims readiness	H2R + SB 343 + FTC alignment	25		0	
Scalability & risk	Supplier capacity, lead times, access expansion pathway	15		0	
Source Reduction	Reduction of virgin content, lightweighting and other methods of source reduction	30		0	
Total		100		0	

Summary Form (to be included in Submission)

We, [name of company and collaborators, if applicable], have created [name of innovation, material or product], in order to [list top 1-3 attributes and benefits of this entry].

We are confident that we are making better [bottles or containers] that help retailers meet their source reduction goals without sacrificing quality or performance.

[1] recyclable, reusable, and/or refillable.

[2] [How2Recycle's Guide to Recyclability](#)