

HOW TO BUILD BUY-IN FOR YOUR SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING STRATEGY

SAMPLE CONVERSATIONS

While our [Building Buy-in](#) resource was created to “make the case” for sustainable packaging to your organization’s leadership, we know these concepts need advocates who'll drive change, not just another document to file away. Below are the most frequent concerns about sustainable packaging you'll hear from leadership, customers, and suppliers, along with responses that keep momentum going.

YOU'LL HEAR:

“Enforcement of EPR laws isn’t going to happen – industry groups are litigating, and states have delayed implementation timelines.”

YOU CAN SAY:

Litigation is a standard industry response to new regulations, not evidence of failure. We saw similar legal challenges with bottle bills, electronics recycling mandates, and emissions standards, all of which eventually took effect. Delayed implementation is sometimes a positive sign of harmonization and simplification.

Delays often reflect pragmatic adjustments to ensure workability or give the industry more time to provide critical feedback. The EU’s PPWR legislation, originally proposed in 2022, went through an intense amendments period in 2023 and 2024, with over 200 amendments proposed. With formal adoption in 2025, it gave an 18-month transition period leading to the general application date of August 12, 2026. This shows that despite opposition or legal challenges, these new frameworks do eventually go into effect. In the U.S, Maine's packaging law has moved forward despite litigation, with the first program fees collected in 2024. California, Colorado, Maine, and Oregon have already begun phased implementation of packaging EPR programs.

The political coalition behind EPR is durable. These laws pass with bipartisan support because they shift costs from taxpayers to producers, a principle that both conservatives and progressives endorse. With waste management costs rising and landfill capacity shrinking, municipalities have strong motivation to see EPR through.

YOU'LL HEAR:

“Consumers don't care about sustainability compared to today's other issues like inflation or geopolitical instability, and they're certainly not willing to pay more for it.”

YOU CAN SAY:

Consumers might have competing priorities, but they still expect us to do the heavy lifting on sustainability. [83% of consumers](#) believe companies should bear at least some responsibility for the end-of-life of their product. Plus, 68% of consumers are [concerned about chemicals](#) in food packaging, with 8 in 10 wanting companies to be more transparent about chemicals in products.

Consumers have thoughts and opinions on what sustainability means, and they expect us to deliver those options at near cost parity. The good news is that when we give them the materials or formats they're looking for, and explain why they're more sustainable, sustainability can be a [purchase intent driver](#) and consumers will be more likely to remain [loyal](#) to a sustainable brand.

YOU'LL HEAR:

“It's cheaper to just pay the EPR fees than to make significant changes to our supply chain.”

YOU CAN SAY:

Not making changes to our portfolio is a huge medium and long-term risk. In just a handful of years, some of the most common packaging materials like flexibles may be effectively banned in key markets because they haven't been able to meet the required recycling rates.

Inaction isn't really an option — we'll end up paying more in the long-term when we're forced to react to the laws and make big changes quickly. Instead, we can look for ways to reduce our fees through strategic material changes and shifts.

Despite the cost of change, innovation can pay for itself when we factor in the millions in fees saved across multiple global markets that are all aligning around certain packaging characteristics like recyclability and labeling.

YOU'LL HEAR:

“Packaging isn't a big source of carbon emissions for our company.”

YOU CAN SAY:

At first, the climate impact of packaging might not seem significant. It's only approximately 2-4% of global emissions. But this is more than the aviation and shipping industries combined, and larger than the entire waste sector. For some product categories, like beverages, packaging can be a much higher portion of the product's carbon footprint.

For us, packaging should still be a sustainability priority because of the many collateral benefits that solutions can have. For example, using recycled content turns waste into a feedstock and reduces the need for virgin materials or land use. These benefits are hard to quantify but are a critical part of the bigger sustainability picture. Packaging is also one of the first ways that consumers enter into and engage with the broader sustainability conversation, so we can use it to educate them about other impactful behaviors.