

# *Recyclability & Reuse*

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How to Use Packaging to Improve Prepared Food Sustainability

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# Why Do You Need a Packaging Sustainability Plan?

**30** states

Number of states with material bans or recycled content mandates already in place

**40%**

Minimum threshold for California SB54 source reduction target to be achieved by direct elimination or by switching to reuse and refill systems

**19**

Number of states that have introduced EPR proposals to date (CA, CO, ME & OR are now law).

**Growing consumer interest,  
Legislative momentum...**



# ***Truly Sustainable Packaging***

- 1. Protects and preserves the food**  
*to limit food waste*
- 2. Offers viable options after use**  
*to reduce packaging waste*

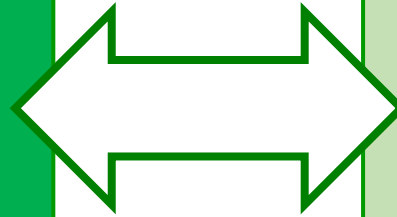


# ***Truly Sustainable Packaging***

## **ECONOMICALLY Sustainable**

Food that arrives looking and tasting great:

1. Gets eaten
2. Brings customers back for more



## **ENVIRONMENTALLY Sustainable**

Packaging that is

- Reusable
- Recyclable
- Compostable



# Reducing Waste

- Protecting & Preserving Food

- 30-40% of food produced is not eaten
- Methane from food waste is 80x more potent than CO2 emissions
- Food waste is the single most common material landfilled and incinerated (about 240lbs of food per person per year)
- 83% of food waste comes from homes, restaurants, grocery and food service (that is, it is not from farms and manufacturers)

- Using the wrong package increases food waste *and* packaging waste

- All approaches must be economically sustainable



# ***Why prioritize protecting the food?***

Food Item	GHG Emissions Ratio: Food to Packaging
Ham (cooked)	624:1
Beef	370:1
Whole chicken	114:1
Cheese	52:1
Fish	13:1
Pasta	7:1



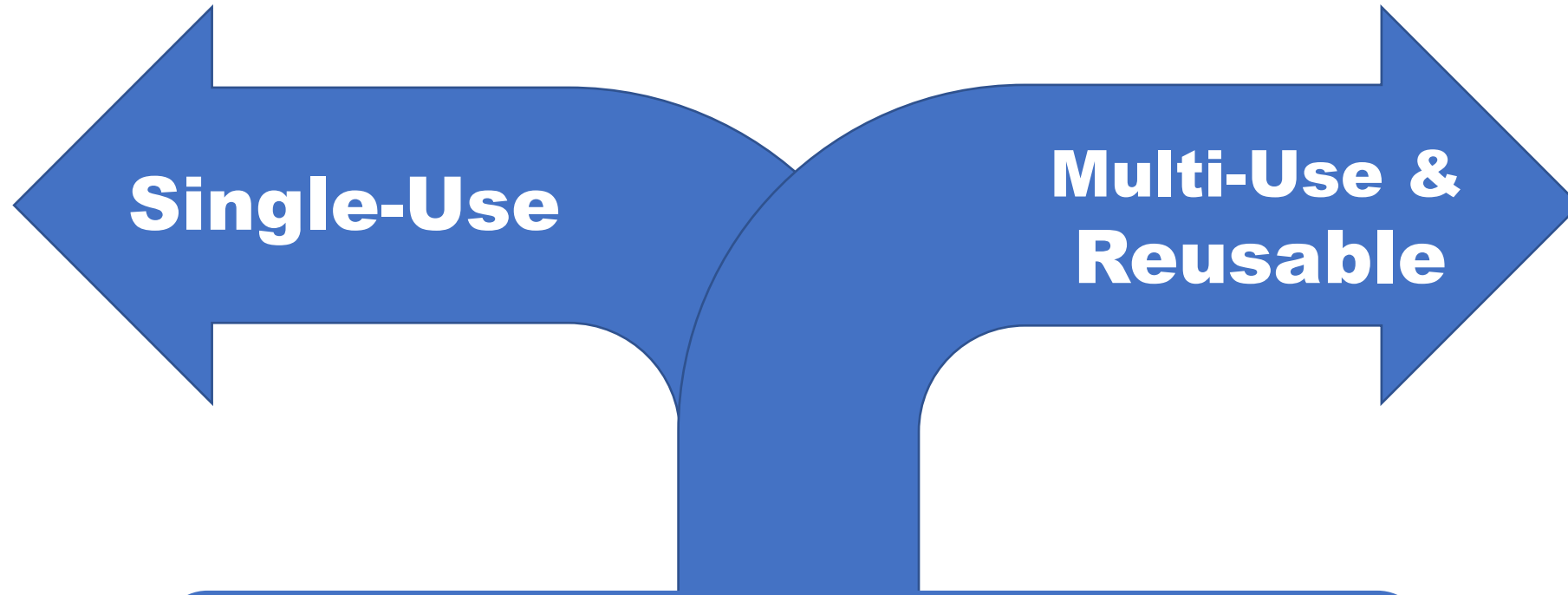
# Why prioritize protecting the food?

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Ham (cooked)	624:1
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or





**Protect & Preserve Food**



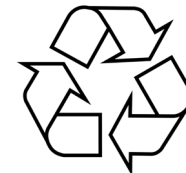


# ***Single-Use Goal: Minimize the Impact***

1. **Food waste:** protect the food
2. **Packaging waste:** options after use
  - Compost: certified compostable
  - Reduce: reduced material
  - Recycle: recyclable materials with the widest recycling access



**Certified Compostable**  
Independently tested and verified to break down completely in a commercial compost facility after use.



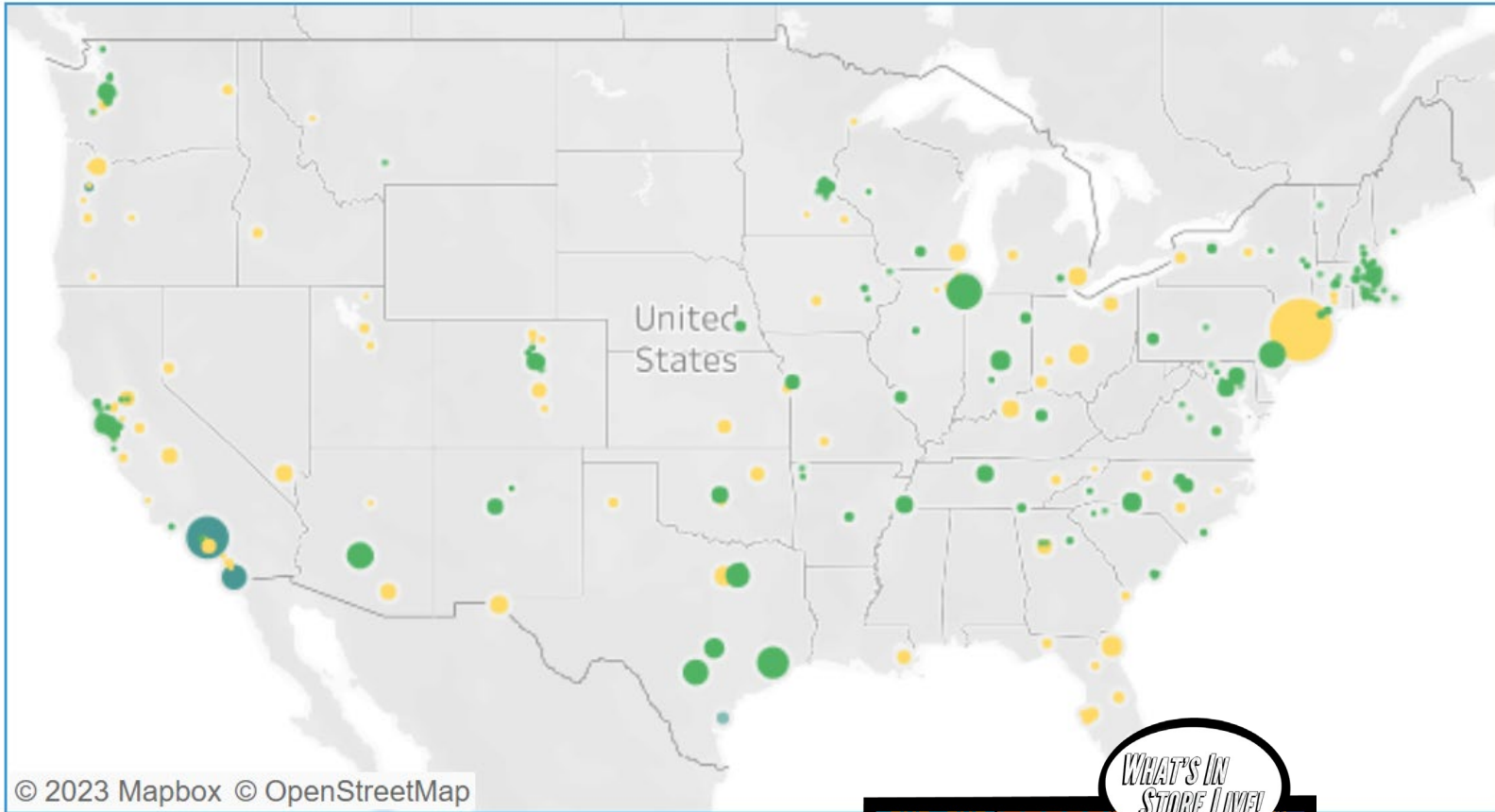
**Recyclable**  
Convenient and efficient recycling requires:

- Accepted materials
- Clean & dry



**IDDBA | 2023**

# Compostable Packaging is Promising, but Access is Limited



© 2023 Mapbox © OpenStreetMap

- GREEN**  
Programs that accept compostable packaging in addition to food waste
- YELLOW**  
Programs that accept food waste, but DO NOT accept compostable packaging

## ← Programs Mapped:

- Municipally-run curbside programs
- Privately-run curbside programs
- Drop-Off programs

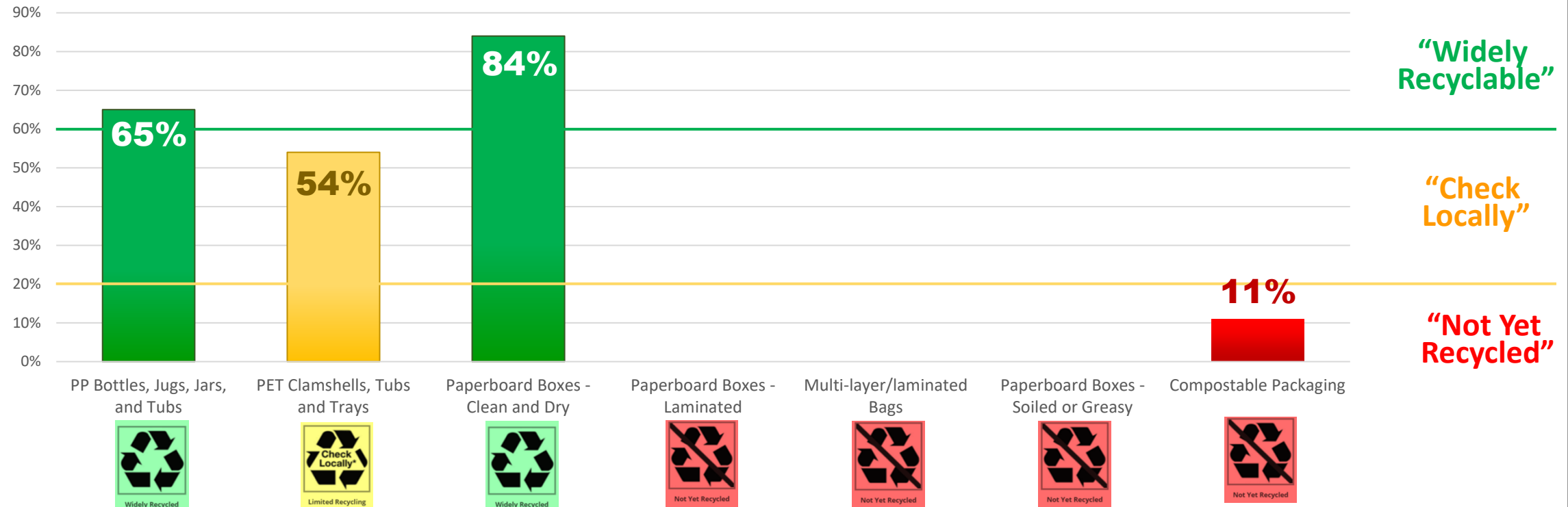
Source: Sustainable Packaging Coalition, 2022



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# Recycling Options Vary Widely for Food Packaging

% of US Population with Access to Recycle by Packaging Substrate & How2Recycle Categories



Packaging that remains Recyclable or Compostable after use offers customers a convenient solution

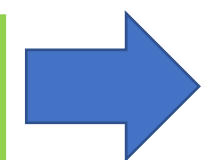
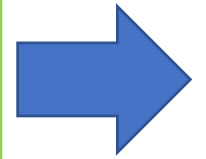
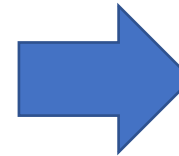
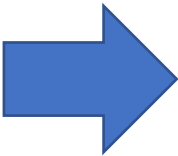


Source: Sustainable Packaging Coalition, 2021  
Centralized Study on the Availability of Recycling

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# Plastics Recycling Value Chain:

## First stop = Material Recovery Facility (MRF)



- Material is sorted, baled, and sold to a producer or PRF
- Markets continue to develop for PET, HDPE, and PP
- Objective: maximize the value of the outgoing bales and minimize the quantity of low-value material collected
  - Material type, bale composition & contamination determines bale quality and end-market value





# ***Maximizing Recyclability***

- Sorting capabilities vary by municipality
- These options maximize capture and higher end-use recycling:



## **Color:**

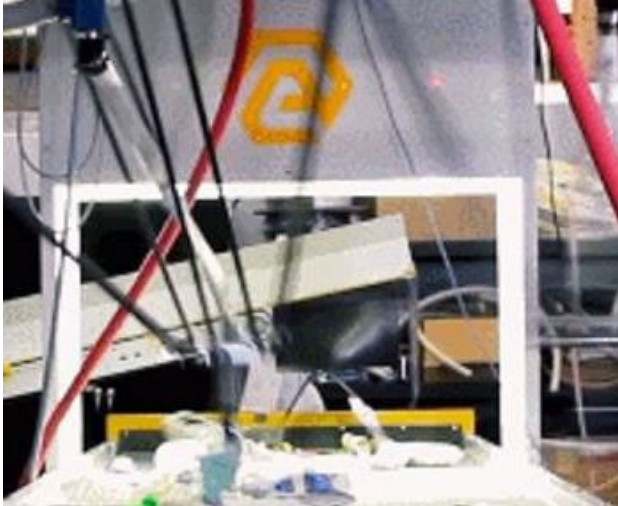
- Clear
- White
- Natural

## **Homo-polymer:**

- Non mineral-filled

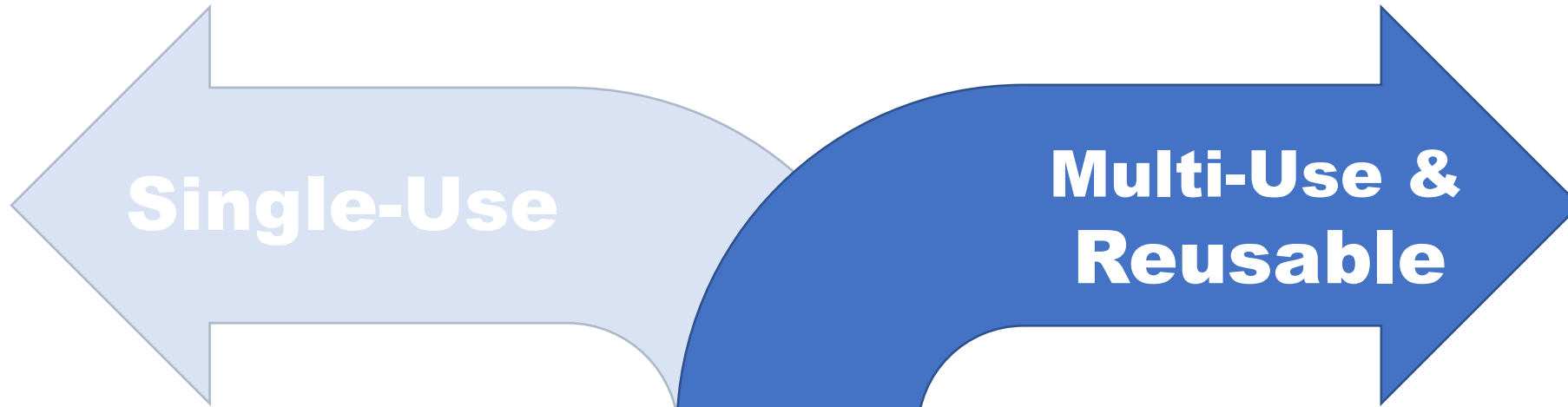


# Sorting Technology is Improving Capture and Increasing Access Rates



- Robotics powered by AI
- Identifies objects in stream by shape, color, brand, SKU
- Sorts up to 80 items per minute
- Receives live data from stream contents to improve selections





**Protect & Preserve Food**





## Return

## Refill

## Consumer Reuse

	Store or Service collects, cleans and returns to use	Consumer refills container on future visits	Consumer reuses and recycles at end of use
<b>Container</b>	Container is loaned to consumer	Consumer owns container	Consumer owns container
<b>Deposit</b>	Requires a deposit	No deposit required	N/A
<b>Washing</b>	Operator or 3P service washes	Consumer washes	N/A
<b>Transportation</b>	Operator or 3P service transports	Consumer transports	N/A
<b>Tracking</b>	Requires tracking	No tracking required	N/A







## Return

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## Return

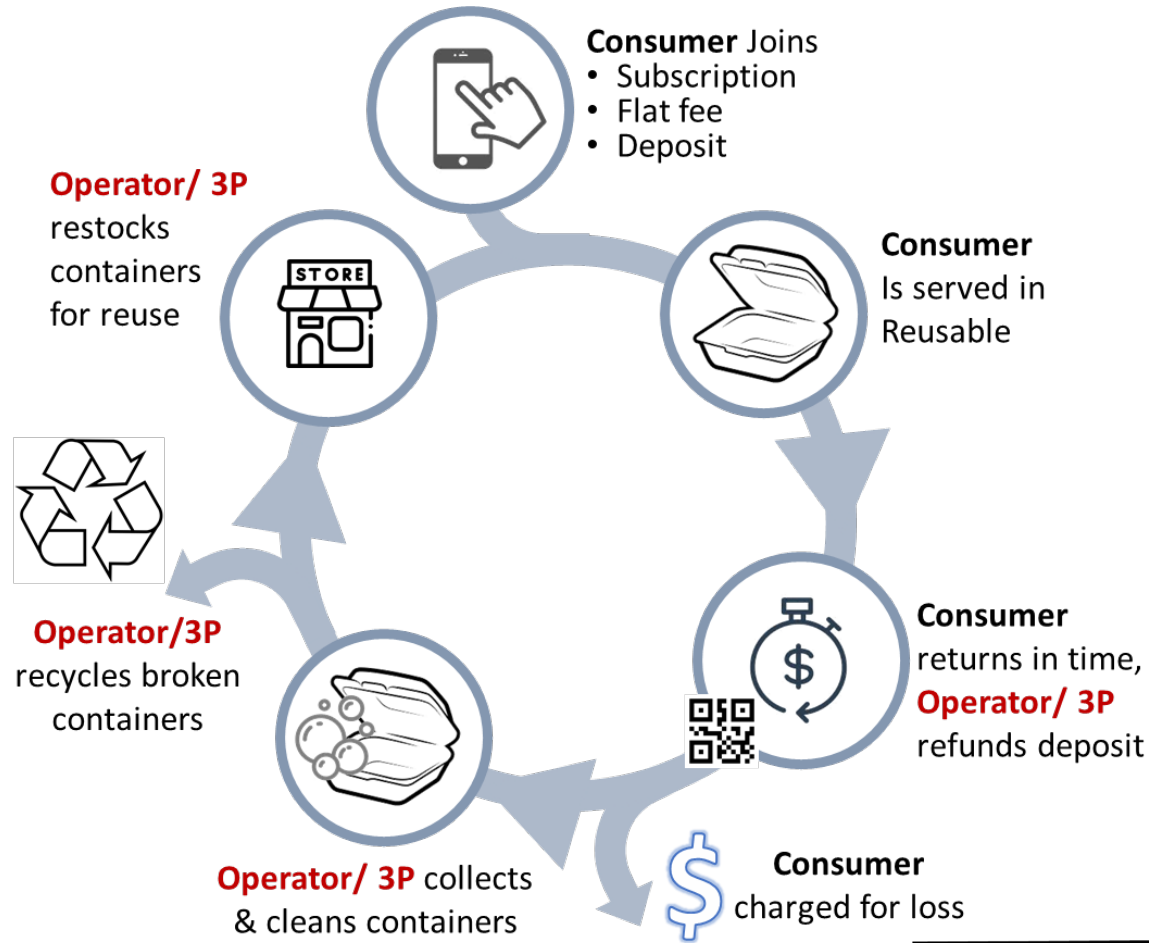
## Refill

## Consumer Reuse

	Store or Service collects, cleans and returns to use	Consumer refills container on future visits	Consumer reuses and recycles at end of use
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# How RETURN Works



## Cost Drivers:

- Product – initial purchase
- Washing
- Transportation
- Loss/damage
- Tracking

## Challenges

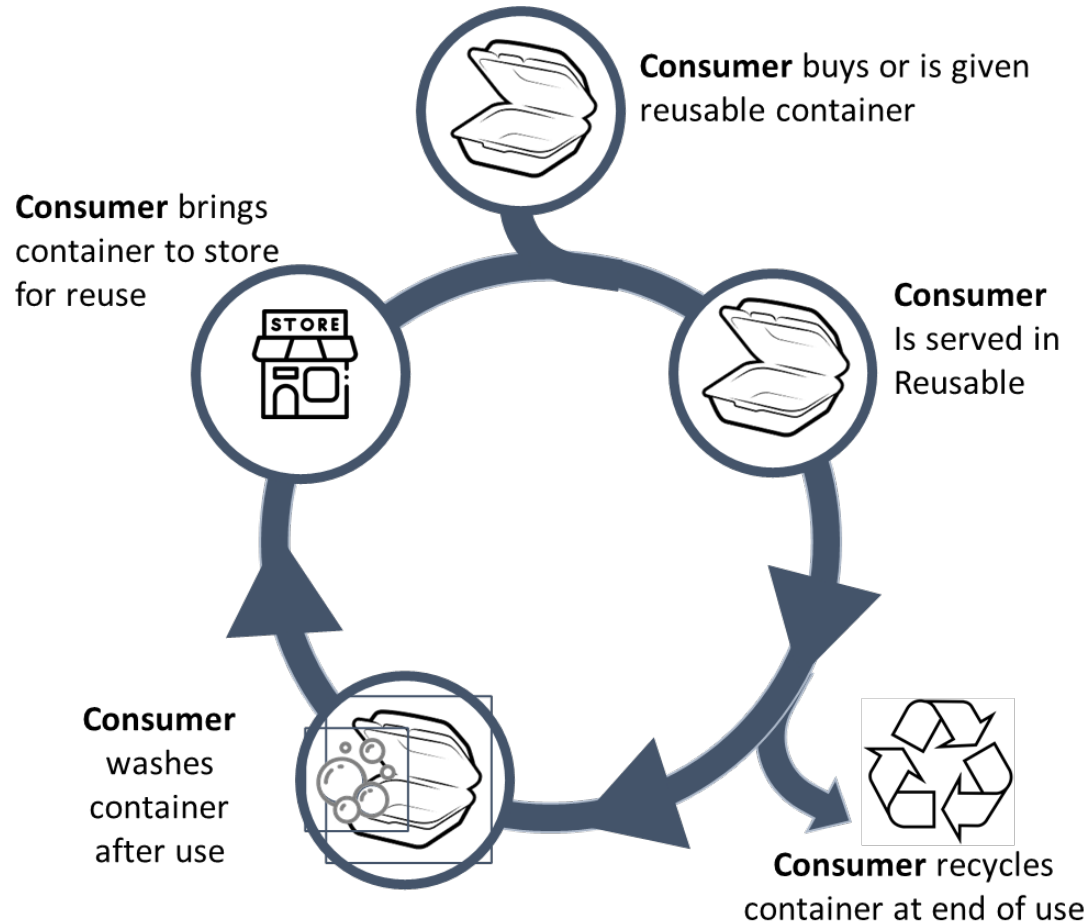
- Deposits
- Loss/damage/late charges
- Complexity

## Benefits

- Net package reduction
- GHG reduction (at thresholds)



# How REFILL Works



## Cost Drivers:

- Product – initial purchase (can be offset with resale)

## Challenges

- Certifying sanitation

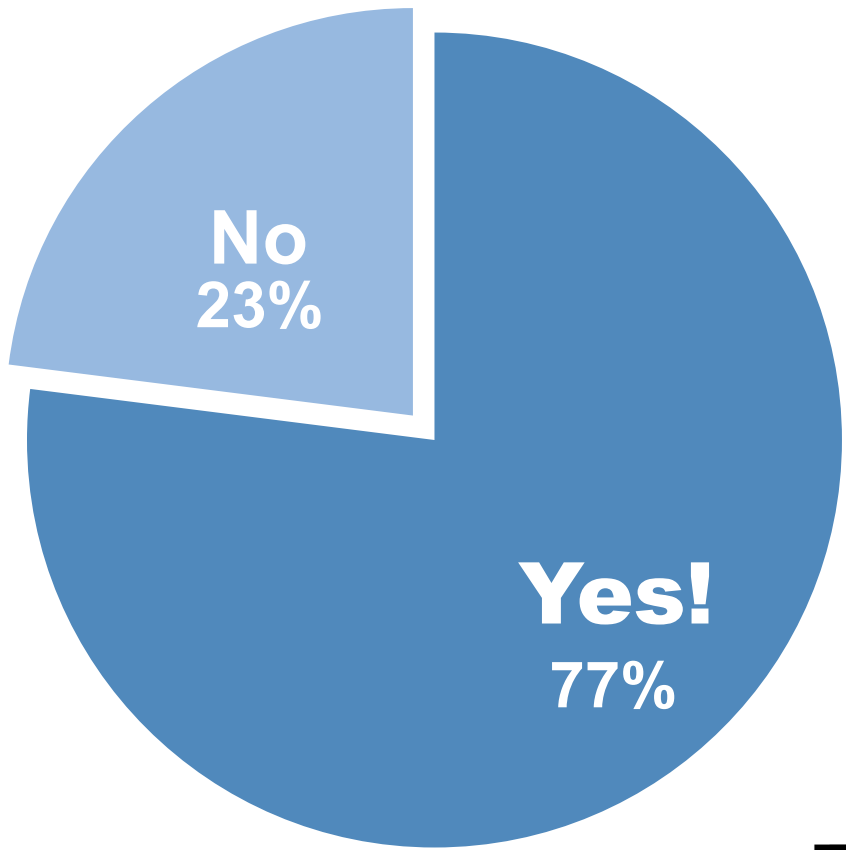
## Benefits

- Consumer value
- No deposit, logistics, or tracking
- Can reduce total packaging costs



# Consumer Value Reusables & Will Pay More

Do You Ever Save Food Containers for Personal Reuse?



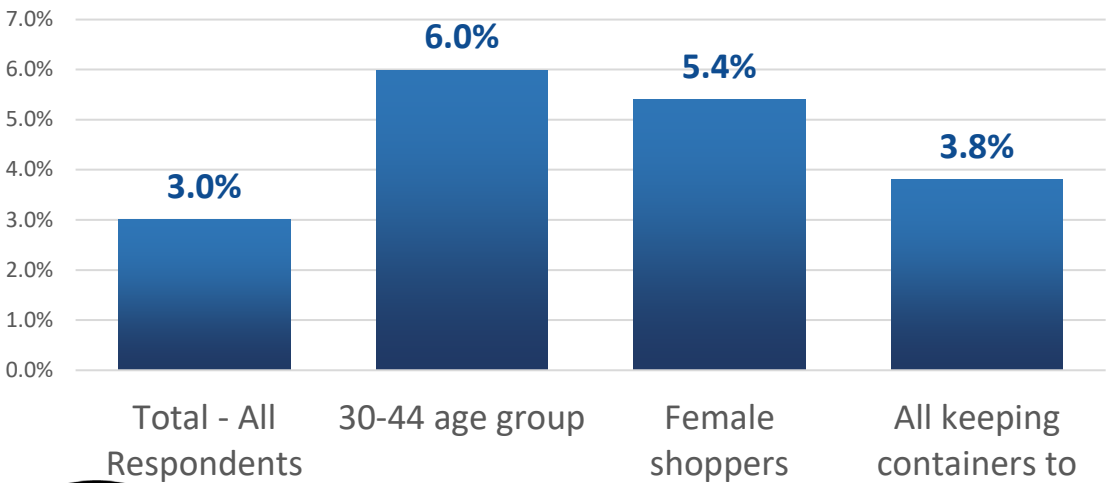
SOURCE: Technomic, 2023, Base: 1,000 consumers

Q: Do you ever save food containers received from restaurants, delis or grocery stores for personal reuse?

Consumers assign a higher value for a reusable alternative.

## Higher Willingness-to-Pay Premium

Q: What price would you pay for this product?  
(\$20 Meal Kit in reusable container vs. single-use packaging)



Source: Anchor Consumer research, 2022

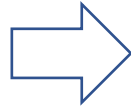
Q: What price would you be willing to pay for this item (Meal kit in reusable vs. single-use packaging)



# How REFILL Reduces Total Packaging Costs



Customer buys counter-served Deli or bulk food item



One single-use container is used (and disposed of after use)

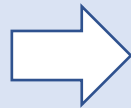


**-\$0.15**

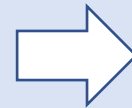
Single-use Container use creates cost



Customer buys counter-served Deli or bulk food item



Customer selects a reusable container (for reuse on return trips)



Revenue

Profit



and

**+\$0.50**

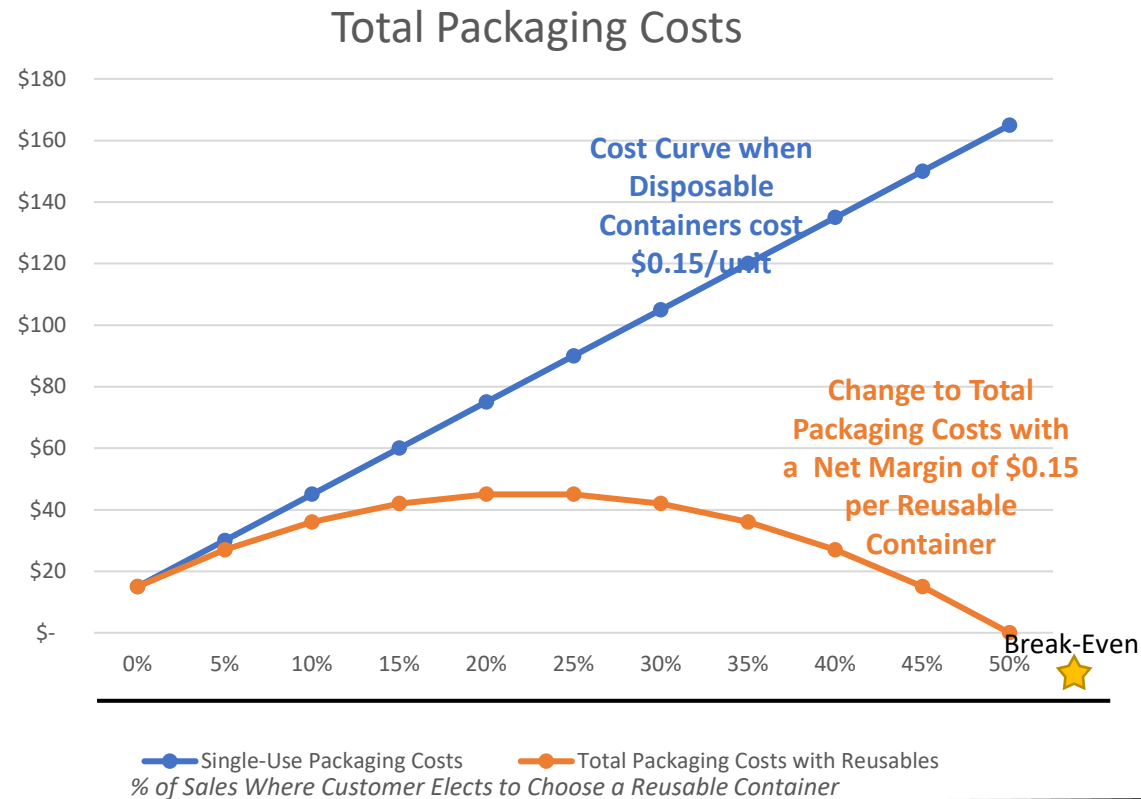
**+\$0.15**

Container sale creates revenue and net profit





# This Delivers an Immediate Benefit by Lowering Total Packaging Costs



When a consumer selects the reusable alternative:

1. The operator realizes a net margin on the reusable container sale
2. The operator also avoids the use *and* cost of a disposable container

Consumers value the reusable containers at approximately \$1

- This creates room to increase the margin netted on each sale
- This will accelerate cost reduction



# Reusables Create an Impactful Differentiator for Your Sustainability Message

Deli Counter



Bulk Food



Example Tent Front Side



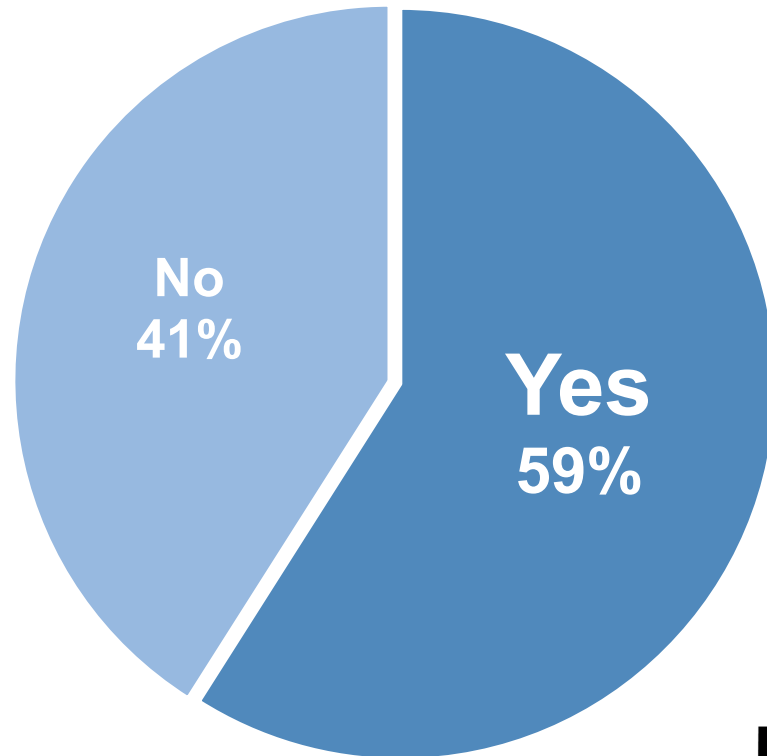
Example Tent Back Side



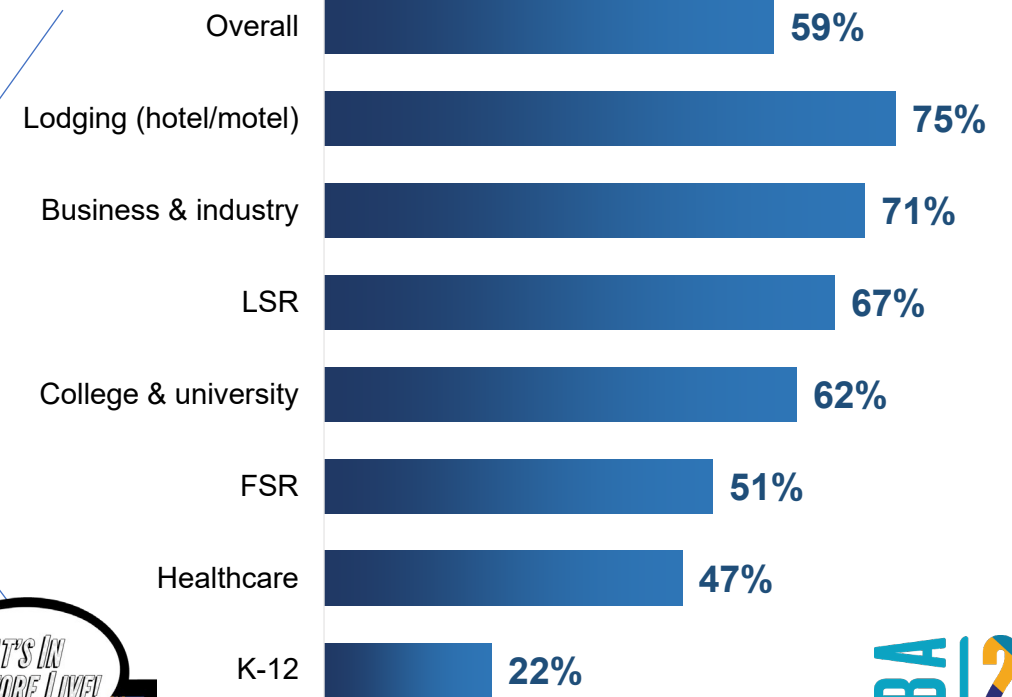


# Foodservice is responding to consumer interest in reuse

DOES YOUR OPERATION PLAN TO BEGIN OFFERING A FORMAL REUSABLE CUP/FOOD CONTAINER PROGRAM IN THE NEXT TWO TO THREE YEARS?



PERCENT OF OPERATORS WITH PLANS TO BEGIN OFFERING A FORMAL REUSABLE CUP/FOOD CONTAINER PROGRAM IN THE NEXT TWO TO THREE YEARS, BY SEGMENT



SOURCE: Technomic CSR & Sustainability, 2023, Base: 331 Operators  
Q: Do you believe you will begin offering such a program in the next two to three years?

# ***Take-Aways***

1. Prioritize protecting the food
2. Consumer action is the key
  - *Make it convenient* for your customers to take action that reduces waste
3. Start exploring reusables



**Thank You!**  
Feel free to  
contact me with  
any questions

*Thank You*

