

RCW 70A.245.040 Penalties for postconsumer recycled content requirements—Penalty.

(1) (a) A producer that does not meet the minimum postconsumer recycled content requirements pursuant to RCW 70A.245.020 is subject to a penalty pursuant to this section. Beginning June 1st of the year following the first year that minimum postconsumer recycled product content requirements apply to a category of covered product, the penalty must be calculated consistent with subsection (2) of this section unless a penalty reduction or corrective action plan has been approved pursuant to subsection (3) of this section.

(b) A producer that is assessed a penalty pursuant to this section may pay the penalty to the department in one payment, in quarterly installments, or arrange an alternative payment schedule subject to the approval of the department, not to exceed a 12-month payment schedule unless the department determines an extension is needed due to unforeseen circumstances, such as a public health emergency, state of emergency, or natural disaster.

(2) Beginning June 1st of the year following the first year that minimum postconsumer recycled product content requirements apply to a category of covered product, and annually thereafter, the department shall determine the penalty for the previous calendar year based on the postconsumer recycled content requirement of the previous calendar year. The department shall calculate the amount of the penalty based upon the amounts in pounds in the aggregate of virgin plastic, postconsumer recycled content plastic, and any other plastic per category used by the producer to produce covered products sold or offered for sale in or into Washington state, in accordance with the following:

(a) (i) The annual penalty amount assessed to a producer must equal the product of both of the following: The total pounds of plastic used per category multiplied by the relevant minimum postconsumer recycled plastic target percentage, less the pounds of total plastic multiplied by the percent of postconsumer recycled plastic used; multiplied by 20 cents.

(ii) Example: $[(\text{Total pounds of plastic used} \times \text{minimum postconsumer recycled plastic target percentage}) - (\text{Total pounds of plastic used} \times \text{postconsumer recycled plastic percentage used})] \times 20$ cents.

(b) For the purposes of (a) of this subsection, both of the following apply:

(i) The total pounds of plastic used must equal the sum of the amount of virgin plastic, postconsumer recycled content plastic, and any other plastic used by the producer, as reported pursuant to RCW 70A.245.030.

(ii) If the product calculated pursuant to (a) of this subsection is equal to or less than zero, the department may not assess a penalty.

(3) (a) (i) The department shall consider granting a reduction of penalties assessed pursuant to this section for the purpose of meeting the minimum postconsumer recycled content requirements required pursuant to RCW 70A.245.020.

(ii) In determining whether to grant the reduction pursuant to (a) (i) of this subsection, the department shall consider, at a minimum, all of the following factors:

(A) Anomalous market conditions;

(B) Disruption in, or lack of supply of, recycled plastics; and

(C) Other factors that have prevented a producer from meeting the requirements.

(b) In lieu of or in addition to assessing a penalty under this section, the department may require a producer to submit a corrective action plan detailing how the producer plans to come into compliance with RCW 70A.245.020.

(4) For the purposes of determining compliance with the postconsumer recycled content requirements of this chapter, the department may consider the date of manufacture of a covered product or the container of a covered product.

(5) A producer shall pay the penalty assessed pursuant to this section, as applicable, based on the information reported to the department as required under RCW 70A.245.030 in the form and manner prescribed by the department.

(6) A producer may appeal the penalty assessed under this section to the pollution control hearings board within 30 days of assessment.

(7) Penalties collected under this section must be deposited in the recycling enhancement account created in RCW 70A.245.100. [2021 c 313 s 5.]

Finding—Intent—2021 c 313: See note following RCW 70A.245.010.