



GUIDE

The right certification ensures successful outcomes in PCR legislation.

To ensure minimum post-consumer recycled (PCR) content policies fulfill their intent, policy elements detailing third-party certification requirements are critical to enabling transparency and creating assurance of compliance. *What are these considerations and how should they be defined to ensure successful legislation?*

WHAT IS THIRD-PARTY CERTIFICATION?

Third-party certification (TPC) is the process of an independent organization verifying a company's claim of recycled materials utilized in products or packaging. Certification is verified according to standards (such as GreenBlue's Recycled Material Standard), creating shared, transparent guidelines for companies and auditors to follow.

While there are many recycled content standards, it is important to recognize that all are not created equally, and improper definition of certification in policy can create unintended ambiguity in reporting or constrain companies' abilities to meet mandated targets - ultimately undermining the goals these PCR bills are created to achieve.

SUCCESSFUL PATHS FOR SPECIFYING CERTIFICATION

If requiring recycled content, the following approaches are recommended to ensure the likelihood of outcomes aligning with policy intent.

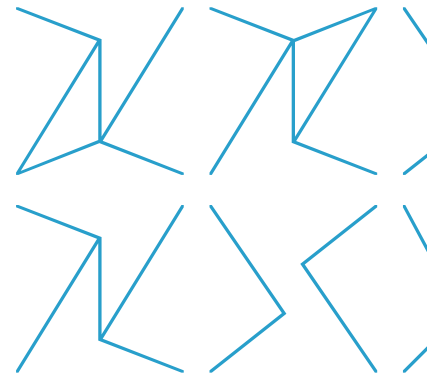
BEST PRACTICE	IMPACT
Require recycled material be third-party certified .	Certification provides external validation of brands' PCR claims, providing agencies a source of truth and accuracy.
Policy should direct rulemaking bodies to identify and approve certification standards and ensure inclusion of critical components.	Agencies can identify strong standards with a structured application process.
Standards should be developed according to voluntary consensus standard methodology .	VCS ensures an open process, with stakeholder and public feedback, due process, and an appeals process.
Standards should mandate full chain of custody certification - from point of recycling through final product manufacturing, as defined by ISO 22095.	Without auditing each company taking possession of PCR in the supply chain, there will be uncertainty of the content in the final product.
It is recommended to use language referring to PCR as material "attributed to" products , as opposed to "physically contained" or "within."	This enables the opportunity to incorporate mass balance methods and increase the eventual capability of companies to meet requirements.
	Mass balance is widely accepted in other industrial supply chains (such as sustainable forestry) when accompanied with third-party certification.
Add language allowing alternative compliance pathways (ACPs) should brands not meet required minimums.	Sufficient PCR volumes may not be available to enable compliance at time of policy implementation. ACPs push brands to take action when below minimums rather than simply paying penalties.

ADVANCING THE USE OF RECYCLED MATERIALS



MATCHING THE VOLUNTARY SPACE

NGOs have made significant progress establishing consensus criteria for certification in the voluntary reporting space. Aligning these efforts with regulatory requirements can truly accelerate demand for PCR. The **US Plastics Pact PCR Certification Principles** offer guidance on criteria certification standards should contain. Legislators and regulators should refer to these as a baseline for evaluating comparative standards or setting requirements in text. The *Recycled Material Standard* aligns with these principles, and is an example of a transparent, comprehensive third-party certification to trust in PCR regulation.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

US Plastics Pact PCR Certification Principles: A consolidated set of criteria defining essential PCR certification requirements for voluntary reporting, developed by a joint industry-NGO coalition. The Certification Principles provide guidance to companies on identifying quality standards and can be used as a reference for defining TPC requirements in policy.

RMS Guidance on Principle Alignment: Analysis of the US Plastic Pact Principles and detail of how the Recycled Material Standard meets those criteria. RMS is the only certification to meet the compliance guidance and offer all approved accounting methods - segregation, controlled blending, mass balance, and book and claim.

Mass balance explanation video: Short video explaining mass balance accounting and how it supports expansion of PCR utilization when paired with third party certification. Widely accepted in other manufacturing certification systems, mass balance tracks the inputs of PCR at a facility over a specified time and allows a company to more freely allocate claims to output products while ensuring there is no double counting or improper activity.

CONNECT WITH THE RECYCLED MATERIAL STANDARD TEAM TO ENSURE YOUR POLICY DETAILS SUPPORT YOUR DESIRED OUTCOMES. TO LEARN MORE, VISIT [RMSCERTIFIED.COM](https://rmscertified.com).

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