



# TIPPING THE SCALE ON RECYCLING IN MICHIGAN

## A STATE OF THE STATE SURVEY POLICY BRIEF

Michigan Applied Public Policy Research | Institute for Public Policy and Social Research College of Social Science  
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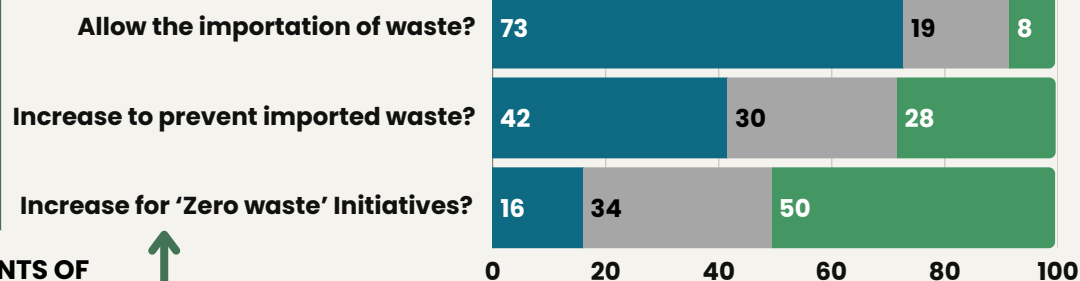
A research team from Michigan State University examined public attitudes in Michigan to enhance recycling infrastructure, public education, and policies regarding an increase in Michigan's statewide disposal surcharge from \$0.36 to align more closely with the \$5.30 Great Lakes region average. Currently, Michigan's recycling rate is below average at 23%, with 22% of its solid waste being imported, a significant concern for legislators advocating for the surcharge increase.

The MSU team developed six survey questions to assess household attitudes towards recycling and support for higher surcharges, three of which results are summarized in this graphic. The survey revealed the need for better education on surcharge impacts, community support for increased recycling infrastructure & allocation of funds for 'zero waste' initiatives, and the adoption of extended producer responsibility (EPR) policies.

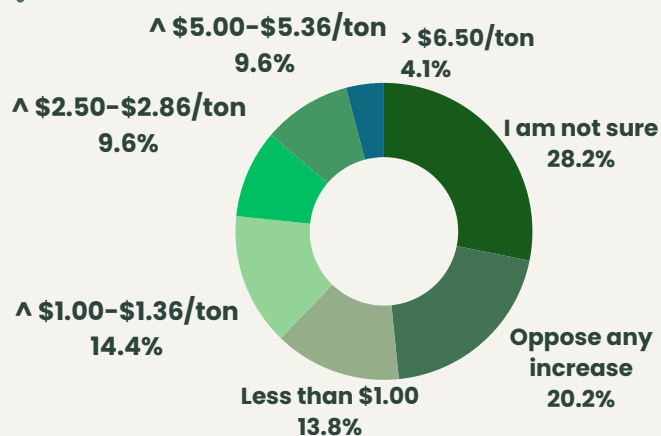
### Key Findings

### ATTITUDES TOWARDS WASTE IMPORTATION & INCREASING SURCHARGE TO REDUCE IMPORTATION VS USING EXTRA FUNDS FOR RECYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE AND PROGRAMS

- Most respondents support smaller surcharge increases.
- **Significant opposition** and uncertainty indicating concerns about financial burdens and **lack of full surcharge understanding**



### SUPPORT FOR VARYING INCREMENTS OF SURCHARGE INCREASE



- A significant majority (**72.7%**) **oppose importing solid waste**. However, only **28.4%** support increasing surcharges to **reduce waste importation**, while 41.6% oppose and 30% are unsure.
- Support for surcharge increases rises to **50.4%** majority if the funds are allocated to **"zero waste"** and environmental cleanup programs, with 33.5% neutral and 16.1% opposed.
- **Notable gap (>20%)** between support for increases to reduce importation and for enhancing waste reduction resources, suggesting a need for further research on public knowledge on surcharges and importation rates

The top 7 responses to **what might encourage one to recycle more in the future** highlight key challenges in recycling due to insufficient community support and manufacturer accountability.

**Producer Role:** Businesses need to simplify recycling and shift waste management burden from consumers to producers.

**Community Role:** Communities should improve recycling behavior through infrastructure, education, and incentivizing programs.

Suggests a need for more research on **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)** policies and public education support and enhanced incentivizations.

### MOST EFFECTIVE SOLUTIONS TO ENCOURAGING CONSUMER TO RECYCLE MORE

