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**Study: New law could save state NIS 160 million**

# Recycling facilities underutilized because of unsorted waste, report finds

By Zafir Rinat

Waste recycling facilities will have to be used significantly more to meet targets set by the package recycling bill according to a new study. The same goes for plants that burn waste for energy.

Experts who prepared the study for the Environmental Protection Ministry say that Israel creates or imports almost a million tons of packaging material every year, half of which is cardboard. Only 32 per-

cent of the cardboard is recycled and only 12 percent of plastic packing materials. The law, which is to pass its second and third reading soon, calls for recycling 60 percent of all packaging.

According to the study, prepared by researchers from the Technion's Samuel Neaman Institute, the economic consultancy firm Kivun Consultants, and the University of Haifa, existing facilities for recycling cardboard and glass are being underutilized. Good-quality recy-

clable materials do not reach the facilities because households do not separate them at the source.

This situation would change if the Environmental Protection Ministry put its plan to separate wet and dry household waste into action, the experts claim.

As opposed to glass and cardboard, the study states that the infrastructure for recycling plastic has to be doubled to meet the ministry's goals. If industries had access to high-quality plastic, sepa-

rated and washed by color and type, it would be able to use much more recycled materials.

If the law is passed, it will go into affect in four years.

According to the study, recycling will not be able to attain all the goals of the law, because there will not always be a demand for all materials intended for recycling, and also because the sorting or recycling of plastic is often complicated. Therefore some packaging waste will have

to be turned into fuel.

The study predicts that the cost to local government will not rise due to the new law, because cities and towns will save the landfill surcharge, and also because manufacturers or importers of the packaging will bear some of the cost. According to the study, the benefit to the Israeli economy of implementation of the law would be NIS 160 million a year.

The study calls for the establishment of a single body that would represent packaging manufacturers and importers of packaging to work nationally and serve all communities, including in outlying areas.

Incentives will also have to come from the government. "The accountant general in the Finance Ministry will have to require government bodies to give priority to the purchase of recycled materials," said Dr. Ofira Ayalon of the Neaman Institute. "The manufacturers, for their part, will have to use as little packaging as possible," she says.

According to Gil Livneh, mayor of Shoham and chairman of the environment committee of the Israel Union of Local Authorities, implementation of the law will depend on the amount of cooperation between local authorities and manufacturers. Livneh says manufacturers have to bear the cost of separating household packaging, although he says the local authorities do not believe separating packaging-only waste is possible.