

## The Federal Plastics Registry: Canada's Overlooked Packaging Compliance Obligations

Canada's Federal Plastics Registry represents a critical yet underappreciated pillar of the nation's packaging sustainability framework, mandating producers to report plastic imports and sales annually. For businesses navigating EPR across provinces, this federal layer often escapes notice amid provincial deadlines, risking fines up to \$10 million for non-compliance.

### The Regulatory Imperative

Launched under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, the Registry requires companies importing or selling plastic products—ranging from packaging to single-use items—to register and submit data by June 1 each year starting in 2025. This complements provincial EPR programs like Ontario's Blue Box while targeting national plastic pollution reduction goals of 50 percent by 2030, capturing data on over 30 plastic categories missed by fragmented local rules.

### Who Must Comply

Obligated stewards include manufacturers, importers, and distributors of plastic-containing goods exceeding de minimis thresholds—typically 50 tonnes annually across all categories. SMEs shipping cross-province or importing face dual burdens with Ontario's May 31 reporting, while large organizations must consolidate enterprise-wide data; retailers selling imported plastics and importers at ports bear first-point responsibility.

Business Type	Key Registry Trigger	Compliance Parallel
SMEs	Cross-province plastic sales >50t	Ontario Blue Box volumes
Large Organizations	National supply chains	Multi-province EPR aggregation
Retailers	Imported plastic packaging	Provincial B2C/B2B splits
Importers	Port-entry plastics	Federal first-point obligation

### Core Reporting Obligations

Registrants must detail plastic types (e.g., PET, HDPE), weights, resins, additives, and end-of-life destinations via Environment and Climate Change Canada's online portal. Data

covers prior calendar-year activities, with June 1, 2026, as the 2025 filing deadline—demanding supply chain audits, supplier attestations, and HS code mapping for accuracy.

### **Strategic Risks and Opportunities**

Overlooked by 70 percent of mid-sized firms per industry surveys, non-reporting invites audits, escalating fees, and supply disruptions—particularly acute for importers amid CBSA scrutiny. Yet proactive compliance yields insights for packaging redesign, tax credits under Canada's green incentives, and alignment with consumer demands for recyclability, turning data into a competitive moat.

### **Actionable Path Forward**

Audit 2025 plastic flows now: classify by Registry schedules, secure supplier data, and register via the federal portal if thresholds met. Integrate with provincial PROs like RPRA for unified tracking; SMEs should prioritize low-cost software to automate, avoiding manual pitfalls that plague 40 percent of first filers.

Canada's plastics agenda demands federal-provincial harmony—treat the Registry not as an add-on, but as the backbone of resilient, sustainable operations. With deadlines looming, systematic preparation secures compliance and innovation alike.

