

ECOS
Cypress, California

ECOS is a leader in sustainable and regenerative manufacturing, making safer cleaning products sold at club and grocery retailers nationwide and around the world.

Family-owned and operated since 1967, ECOS has built sustainability into every part of how it operates, using a “Reduce-Reuse-Recycle-Rethink” methodology. It first dramatically reduces energy and water use, carbon emissions and waste, then offsets what remains through investments in clean energy projects and restoration programs for waterways and habitats.

ECOS achieved carbon neutrality in 2013, TRUE Platinum-level Zero Waste certification in 2015 and water neutrality in 2016.

It was the first manufacturer in the world to attain LEED



Zero Carbon, LEED Zero Energy and LEED Zero Waste certifications at 100 percent of its manufacturing sites and the first in the industrial sector to earn Platinum-level WELL Building certification, held at its California and Illinois facilities.

All four ECOS facilities hold the WELL Health-Safety Rating for Facility Operations and Management.

ECOS has made measurable progress toward its sustainability goals, detailed in

- its most recent annual Sustainability Report. In 2024, ECOS:
- Diverted 98.3 percent of its waste from landfills and incineration, up from 10 percent in 2009;
 - Recycled and repurposed more than 3,500 tons of material, saving some 68 metric tons of CO₂;
 - Used 100 percent renewable energy, including on-site solar at each facility;
 - Restored 16.4 million gallons of water to critically dewatered rivers and streams; and
 - Saved 633.84 metric tons of GHG emissions through

manufacturing and product innovations.

ECOS is built on a foundation of green chemistry and sustainable innovation. From removing phosphates ahead of regulations in 2010 to banning more than 500 known toxins in its formulas, ECOS ensures that every ingredient is safer and serves a functional purpose, with no unnecessary added carbon costs.

Best known for ECOS liquid laundry detergent, the No. 1 selling green laundry detergent in the U.S., ECOS is now expanding its liquidless sheet and pack formats to reduce the weight of its products, cut shipping emissions and provide plastic-free packaging for consumers.

ECOS supports the communities around its four U.S. facilities. In 2024, ECOS donated more than 180 tons of cleaning products, valued at an estimated \$1.4 million, to local non-profits including food banks, children’s museums and youth and family resource centers.



GreenTree Co-Op Market
Mount Pleasant, Michigan

Bulk department sales have been a core and key part of GreenTree Co-Op Market’s grocery cooperative since its founding in 1970.

After recently reviewing sales and efficiencies, GreenTree Co-Op Market uncovered that the store was offering – and shoppers were using – more than 700 plastic bulk bags in three sizes each month. That’s a lot of plastic in a department that has been historically trying to cut down on single-use plastics.

GreenTree Co-Op Market pivoted quickly to find solutions and settled on purchasing



Compostic Brand bags to replace plastic ones. These bags also come in three sizes but are 100 percent backyard compostable.

It was important to limit plastic use, and it was a massive benefit to have the bags backyard compostable as Mount Pleasant doesn’t have commercial composting available. They are price competitive with the former plastic bags but do cost the store a few more cents per bag.

Staff tried them out in March this year and had no complaints, so the plastic bags were replaced with compostable and neither shoppers nor the store have looked back. What an easy swap with impactful results. It was an easy rollout for shoppers during April’s Earth Day, too.

Compostic Brand also makes T-shirt grocery bags that are backyard compostable, which GreenTree Co-Op Market is looking into next. Removing or reducing plastic grocery bags will be a major win in the continued fight to reduce and eliminate single-use plastics.

Emerald Packaging
Union City, California

Emerald Packaging’s innovative packaging material is an unsupported coextruded film containing 30 percent post-consumer recycled resin – a first in potato packaging.

Developed in direct response to Walmart’s Project Gigaton initiative, which aims to reduce or avoid one billion metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions from the global value chain by 2030, the film demonstrates a major step toward sustainable packaging.

The challenge was to maintain clarity, seal integrity and impact resistance while incorporating recycled content. Through advanced resin engineering, the result is a durable, high-performance and



environmentally responsible packaging solution.

By meeting a use of 30 percent PCR resin in a grocery potato market food-contact film, Emerald Packaging overcame significant material performance challenges. The film had to have the same clarity, seal strength and machinability as its virgin polyethylene equivalent and possess strength capable of absorbing five and 10 pounds of potatoes falling into the bags from five feet.

It’s a challenging packaging application, with the bag needing to survive nearly 500 pounds of impact force in the case of the 10-pound bag. To accomplish this, Emerald built a proprietary film formulation using a three-layer co-extrusion process.

By incorporating post-consumer recycled resin back into new products, the company has minimized the use of virgin resins made from fossil fuels, drastically reducing the material’s carbon footprint. This innovation represents a shared commitment by grower, retailer and manufacturer to build a more sustainable supply chain.

It proves that environmental responsibility and product performance aren’t mutually exclusive, paving the way for broader application of recycled content in food packaging. The partnership shows how collaborative innovation – from resin optimization to large-scale rollout – can speed meaningful environmental impact.

Food Lion
Salisbury, North Carolina

Food Lion’s sustainability strategy focuses on reducing waste, feeding communities and operating efficiently across its 10-state footprint, delivering measurable environmental and social impact.

At the core is its partnership with Divert, which redirects unsaleable and organic materials away from landfills into energy recovery through anaerobic digestion. Food Lion has seen a more than 50 percent reduction in food waste compared to its 2016 baseline and continues to pursue ways to maintain progress.

Through Food Lion Feeds, its hunger-relief platform, the company extends its impact beyond waste reduction. In partnership with Feeding America, stores recover and donate fresh food weekly, addressing food insecurity while reducing waste.

Today, 33 food banks and more than 1,200 pantries receive regular pickups, helping provide nearly 70 million pounds of food in 2025 – including 5 million pounds through the frozen dairy initiative – and contributing to 1.7 billion meals donated since 2014. This work highlights the powerful intersection of sustainability and community care.

In-store recycling programs further advance circular economy efforts. Across 1,112 stores,



materials such as cardboard, paper and plastics are recycled, diverting significant waste from landfills.

In 2025, Food Lion recycled more than 314 million pounds of cardboard (157,256 tons), saving an estimated 2.67 million trees and more than 1 billion gallons of water. Overall, Food

Lion achieved an 83 percent diversion rate in 2025, reflecting a closed-loop approach that drives both environmental and operational benefits. Community recycling initiatives also enable customers to recycle directly at their local Food Lion, reinforcing shared responsibility and engagement.

Operational efficiency remains a priority. LED lighting upgrades have further reduced energy consumption, lowered emissions and enhanced customers’ in-store experience.

Together, these efforts reflect an integrated approach to environmental responsibility, community care and operational excellence. Importantly, Food Lion continues to invest in sustainable practices while maintaining its longstanding commitment to affordable groceries for customers.

By reducing food insecurity, conserving resources and strengthening partnerships, Food Lion is helping build a more resilient, circular economy for the towns and cities it serves.

Gellert Global Group
Elizabeth, New Jersey

Gellert Global Group was nominated for its engagement of employees on sustainability topics.

GGG’s Green Team consists of about 30 volunteers who help educate and engage employees in environmental awareness. Past events have included Composting 101, Sustainable Gift-Wrapping ideas, Recycling 101, Regenerative Agriculture and The Impact of Soil on Our Food Systems, Food Scrap Recipes and Upcycled Food 101.

GGG hosts annual volunteer cleanups to preserve green spaces and protect local waterways from coastal debris.

GGG facilities in Miami and L.A. tend to local garden spaces to beautify the community. The L.A. warehouse even grows fresh foods and herbs for employees.

The Green team regularly shares stories of suppliers who are driving eco-friendly changes in their communities across the world.

The group also has enhanced awareness of waste streams with education on how GGG recycles batteries, its partnership with local biodigester, Trenton Renewables, and challenging employees to go plastic-free in July, including swapping plastics out for reusable plates and cutlery in the office breakrooms at its New Jersey headquarters.



Highline Mushrooms
Leamington, Ontario, Canada

For 60 years, North American mushroom packaging didn’t change. Since the 1960s, the category defaulted to black and colored plastic tills. That material is technically PET, but it’s rarely recycled because optical sorters at recycling facilities can’t read dark plastic. Most of it gets downcycled or sent to landfill.

In 2023, Highline Mushrooms broke from the industry and moved its retail program to clear, recycle-ready rPET tills with a monolayer top seal, launching with Costco U.S. and then transitioning other retail partners.

Clear rPET sorts cleanly, cuts contamination and

supports closed-loop recycling, directly advancing the U.S. Plastics Pact goal of 100 percent reusable, recyclable, or compostable packaging. Highline’s switch alone keeps more than 80 million colored tills out of landfill. When the full North American industry follows, that number exceeds 1 billion tills.

Consumers drove the change. Highline ran its own North American surveys across key trade areas. The results were clear: 62 percent said the food industry should prioritize clear over black plastic; 96.5 percent wanted single-use plastic reduced; and 99.1 percent said companies should use recyclable materials.

Transparency also lifted Highline’s own standards,



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Award-Winning Packaging
That Advances Your
Sustainability Goals

Emerald Packaging’s award-winning food-grade post-consumer recycled packaging is helping grocers and retailers move toward a more sustainable future – and meet their EPR goals.

Our portfolio also includes next generation compostable materials, including fiber, and recycle-ready films.

Contact us to learn more.



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