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PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

SEEKING A PACKAGING POLLUTION SOLUTION

Since 2021, seven U.S. states have passed extended producer responsibility laws to hold companies accountable for the boxes, bottles, jugs, jars and cans their products come in. GETTY IMAGES

PATCHWORK OF POLICIES

Shifting costs to companies could reduce waste – but fragmented recycling laws across U.S. complicate progress

Erin Victor University of Maine | THE CONVERSATION

Standing in your local retail store, it can be mind-boggling to try to weigh the pros and cons of all the packaging options.

Take shampoo, for example.

Shampoo can come in a rigid plastic bottle, a flexible squeeze tube, a refillable metal canister or a solid bar in a paperboard box.

Trying to make environmentally friendly or socially conscious purchasing decisions can be a challenge, as product packaging can feature various sustainability claims.

You might see a product listed as any of the following: recyclable, compostable, refillable, made with recycled content or bio-based materials, carbon or plastic neutral, cruelty free, fair trade, promoting responsible forest management, or a myriad of other labels.

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Extended producer responsibility policies aim to hold big companies liable for what happens to the containers their products are packaged in. SEAN GALLUP/GETTY IMAGES FILE

Court: No new MO voting map for 2026

GOP gerrymandering struck down by decision

Rudi Keller
MISSOURI INDEPENDENT

The U.S. Supreme Court on Friday, Sept. 25 drove a stake through the heart of Missouri’s undead congressional map, ordering it be buried for the year and for voters to cast ballots in the districts they’ve used the past two election cycles.

In a unanimous decision, the court said that state law rules in the case.

“In short, as a matter of state law, the 2022 map — not the 2025 map — must be used in the 2026 congressional election,” states the ruling, which is unsigned.

The decision ends, for this election at least, Republicans’ effort to use a gerrymandered map to improve their chances of winning a seventh Missouri seat in the U.S. House.

It also caps three weeks of dramatic court action that changed the map in place for November five times, tested the jurisdiction and overlap of state and federal courts and exasperated local election officials responsible for conducting the vote.

In the final brief filed on behalf of Secretary of State Denny Hoskins before the ruling, state Solicitor General Lou Capozzi said it was already too late to prevent chaos in this year’s election.

“(T)he honest truth is that — regardless of what this court does — Missouri will not be able to run an orderly 2026 general election,” Capozzi wrote. “If required to use the 2025 map, Missouri can maintain the status quo that governed for about a year and will avoid disenfranchising individuals who voted in the primary election; but Missouri will undoubtedly violate (the federal law) deadline for sending ballots to military and overseas voters.”

The gerrymandered map drawn last year by the legislature targeted U.S. Rep. Emanuel Cleaver of Kansas City by stretching the 5th District deep into

See **MAP**, Page 2A

Boone County emergency calls gain added reliability

Janis Reeser
Columbia Daily Tribune
USA TODAY NETWORK

Boone County Joint Communications has completed its transition to a new emergency communications network designed to improve the reliability and flexibility of 911 service in the Columbia area.

The transition, completed Sept. 24, also restored Text-to-911 service for the public, according to a community announcement. Boone County Joint Communications moved to a new AT&T Emergency Services IP Network, known as

ESInet, which serves as the foundation for Next Generation 911 systems.

ESInet is a secure, high-availability network that improves how emergency calls reach dispatchers and provides greater redundancy, resiliency and flexibility than a traditional Enhanced 911 network, according to the announcement.

One of the key upgrades is the addition of multiple paths for delivering 911 calls. The new configuration includes redundant network connections and a wireless tertiary connection through FirstNet. If primary connectivity is disrupted, the additional paths can help maintain 911 services.

Boone County Joint Communications said in the announcement that the new network also allows calls to be rerouted when outages or other disruptions affect the communications center. Calls can be directed to alternate locations or designated 911 centers as needed.

While officials acknowledged that no technology can eliminate every potential disruption, the upgraded network includes additional redundancy and routing capabilities intended to reduce the chances that a single network failure could prevent a 911 call from reaching an emergency telecommunicator.

The process for reaching emergency

responders remains unchanged. Residents should continue to call 911 during emergencies. Individuals who cannot place a voice call may send a text message to 911. For non-emergency public safety needs, residents should call 311.

For more information, contact Christie Davis, director of Boone County Joint Communications, at jointcommunications@boonemo.gov.

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