

Consumer Habits and Behaviors Relating to Sustainable Package Labeling

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Executive Summary

This report provides insights into consumer perspectives on product packaging and sustainability labeling based on a survey of 1,370 adults across Canada and the United States. The key findings reveal moderate label reading habits, desire for accurate sustainability claims, knowledge gaps, and guarded optimism around potential improvements.

Label Reading Habits

The survey found low to moderate levels of label reading while shopping for household products. Only 29% of respondents frequently read labels, while over half rarely or never check labels. Of those who do read labels, most are seeking ingredient, nutritional or other basic product information rather than sustainability details. This highlights room to improve label usage and awareness.

Influence on Purchasing

While 50% of respondents said accurate sustainability information on packages is important, only 45% were willing to change purchase habits to support such claims. This reveals a gap

between attitudes and behaviors. Factors like price, quality and convenience were seen as more influential than sustainability labeling for most consumers currently.

Desire for Accurate Claims

However, 72% believe companies should provide verified sustainability information on packaging. 58% said accuracy of claims is highly important and 61% want more oversight and regulations around environmental marketing language. This appetite for trustworthy labeling reflects growing wariness of potential "greenwashing."

Knowledge Levels

Despite the desire for rigor, familiarity with sustainability labeling terminology and standards remains low. Only 12% considered themselves very knowledgeable about relating consumer choices to environmental impacts. Just 15% felt well-informed on labeling approaches. Targeted education is needed to empower choices.

Cautious Optimism

Attitudes reflect cautious optimism that improvements in labeling transparency and accountability can be achieved through collaboration between companies, government and the public. But high costs may limit follow through and 40% remain pessimistic about the feasibility of progress.

In summary, the analysis indicates labeling practices do not significantly guide most purchases currently. But demand exists for honest sustainability information along with stricter standards. Converting this potential into meaningful impact requires reducing knowledge gaps while incentivizing and simplifying values-driven shopping. Though skepticism persists, strategic multi-stakeholder efforts focused on awareness, accessibility and accountability can realize incremental labeling improvements over time.

Introduction

With environmental concerns on the rise, understanding consumer attitudes and perspectives has become essential for driving progress on sustainable packaging. Product packaging has become an important battleground in the efforts to reduce environmental impacts from household consumption. With more brands making sustainability claims on packages, scrutiny is growing on ensuring transparency and credibility of these claims. Surveying consumer perceptions provides vital insights into how packaging is influencing eco-conscious shopping habits.

Understanding current behaviors and attitudes related to label reading, trust in claims, sustainable motivations, and willingness to change can reveal barriers and opportunities for progress. It highlights gaps where intentions diverge from actions. This research is intended to give a nuanced picture of what drives consumers to believe and act on sustainability claims. These consumer insights allow all stakeholders – companies, policymakers, watchdogs, and

citizens – to craft integrated strategies and solutions. Tailored interventions can activate attitudes and remove hurdles that hinder sustainable purchasing decisions.

Methodology

Sample Collection:

The survey was conducted over a 6-month period from March 2023 to August 2023 to gather a statistically significant sample that was representative of the adult population in Canada and the United States.

Respondents were recruited through paid online advertisements placed on popular platforms including Facebook, Instagram, Google Ads, Reddit, and email listservs. The ads targeted adults ages 18+ located in Canada and the US. Further targeting parameters such as age, gender, location, education level, and income were used to achieve a diverse sample aligned with census demographics.

Quota thresholds were set prior to launch based on census data and monitored dynamically throughout the fielding period. Underrepresented demographics were targeted with additional ads to maintain representativeness. Prescreening questions confirmed location and age prior to entering the full survey.

The final completed sample consisted of 1370 adults ages 18+ across regions:

- Canada: 221 completes
- Eastern United States: 491 completes
- Central United States: 109 completes
- Western United States: 305 completes
- Southern United States: 244 completes

This provided a statistically significant sample in all regions except for the Central United States

Survey Design:

The survey was designed based on best practices for online survey methodology. Questions were organized into 10 sections covering topics related to consumer perspectives on product packaging and labeling, including:

- Label reading habits
- Influence of labels on purchase decisions
- Attitudes towards sustainability claims
- Knowledge about labeling
- Education and oversight

- Influence of labels on product choices
- Willingness to change behavior
- Personal and social values
- Optimism

The survey was pre-tested prior to launch to refine wording and flow. The final questionnaire consisted of approximately 50 questions and took 15 minutes on average to complete. Data checks were implemented to flag and remove incomplete responses.

Label Reading Habits

The survey results indicate low to moderate levels of label reading habits among consumers when purchasing household products. When asked how often they read labels, 29% of respondents indicated that they read labels frequently, while more than 53% of respondents said they rarely, or never read labels while shopping. This variance in reported label reading habits may be influenced by factors like product type and familiarity. Consumers may be more likely to check labels diligently when purchasing a new or high-risk product versus making habitual purchases. When asked why a consumer chooses to read package labeling, more than 70% of respondents said they did so for either ingredient/contents or nutritional information (shown in Figure 1).

Fig 1.

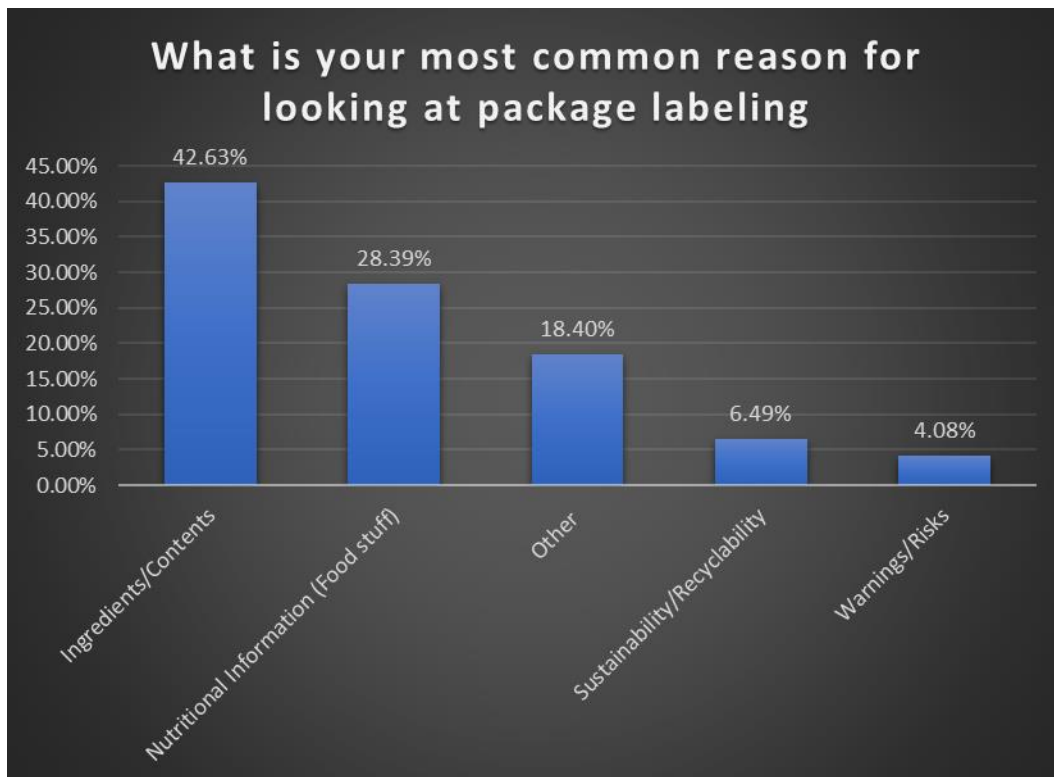
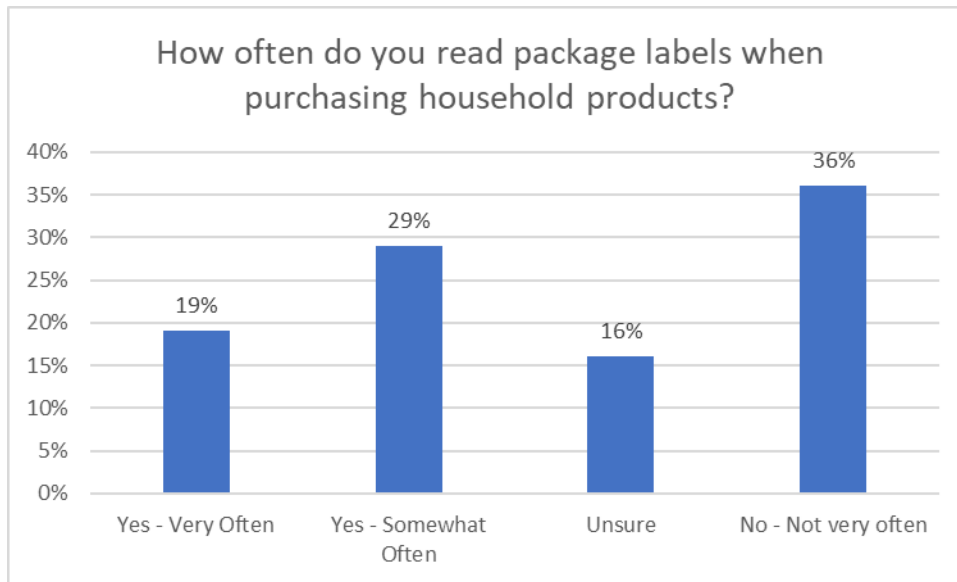


Fig 2.



Also shown in Figure 1 is that less than 7% of respondents looking at packaging labels for information pertaining to recyclability or sustainability information. These results highlight room for improvement in label utilization among many shoppers. Increased consumer education on interpreting and applying labeling details could lead to more informed purchasing decisions that account for sustainability impacts.

While a small segment of conscientious shoppers already leverage labels to inform purchasing decisions, the majority could benefit from understanding how to effectively use labeling information to advance personal and environmental health. Targeted messaging and in-store information may encourage broader adoption of diligent label reading habits. Overall, the self-reported frequency of label usage indicates many consumers are not capitalizing on the insights packaging provides. Progress will require converting passive purchasers into activated and educated label readers. Habitual checking and employing of labels can incrementally shift consumer behavior and industry practices.

As noted above, the data indicates that diligent label reading is not yet a consistent habit for most consumers when shopping for household products. Only 19% of respondents reported checking labels "very often," suggesting there is substantial room to increase attentiveness to labeling among shoppers. Several factors likely contribute to the irregular label reading reported in the survey:

- Product familiarity - Consumers may pay less attention to labels when buying habitual, frequently purchased products. However, they may read labels diligently when considering new or unfamiliar items.
- Risk perception - Shoppers are more inclined to read labels thoroughly when purchasing higher risk products like food, cosmetics, and cleaning supplies versus benign items.

- Time constraints - Busy shoppers rushing to complete purchases may overlook labels if they perceive it as too time consuming.
- Label visibility - Small, obscure label placement on packaging makes information easier to miss. Clear, prominent labels are more likely to capture attention.
- Consumer education - Many shoppers lack knowledge on how to interpret labeling details and apply them to sustainability considerations.

Targeted education campaigns and label design changes could help address these barriers to increase regular label reading across consumer demographics and product categories. The data also reveals that packaging labels have limited influence over purchase decisions related to sustainability. Factors such as price, convenience, brand loyalty and quality are seen as more important than sustainability labeling for most shoppers currently.

Package Labeling Influence on Purchasing Decisions

Fig 3

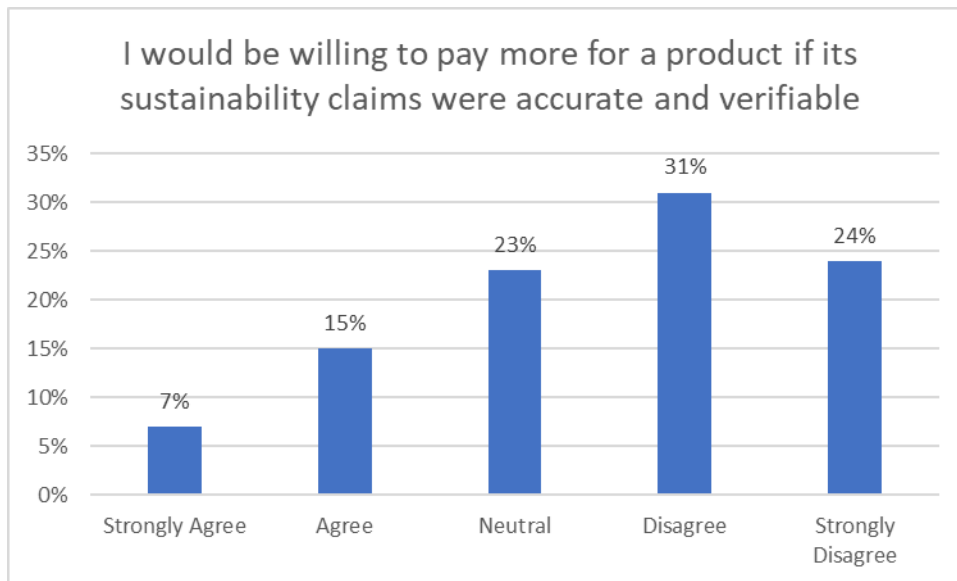


Fig 4

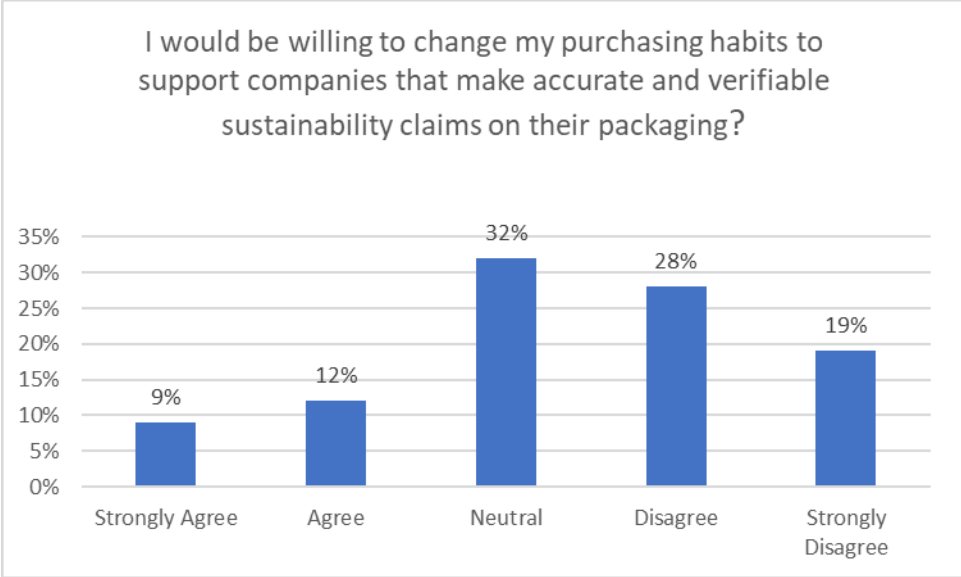


Fig 5

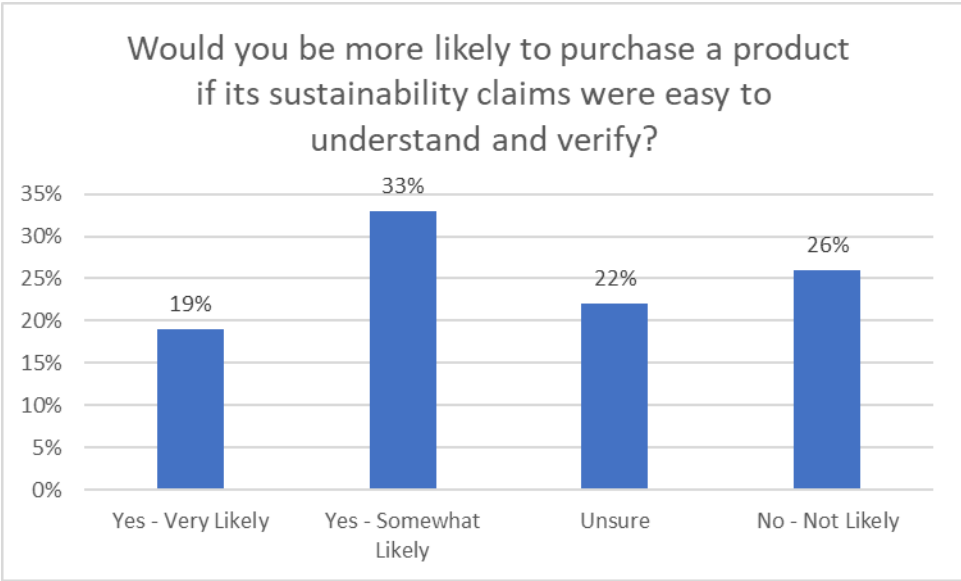
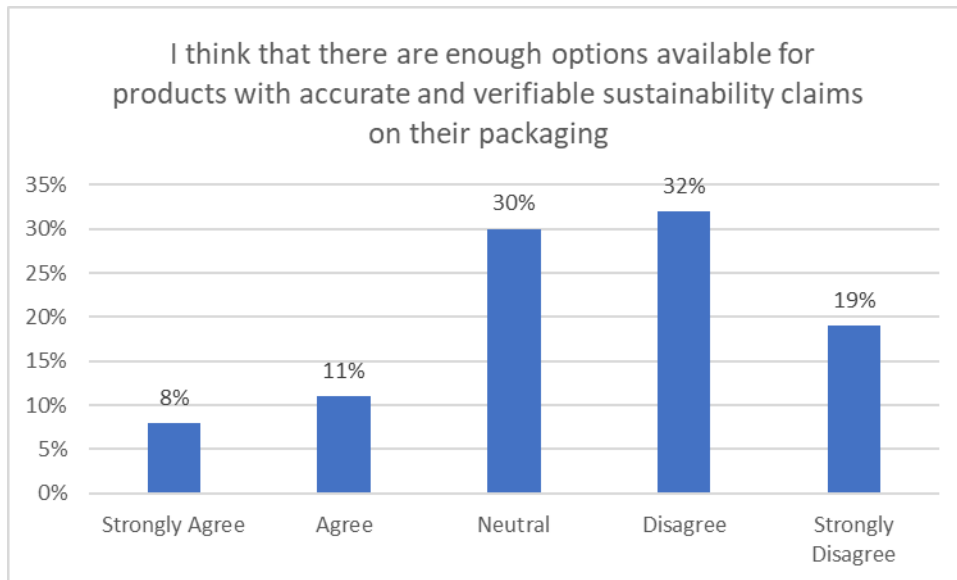


Fig 6.



The survey results indicate that while consumers have a strong desire for the legitimacy and accuracy of package labeling claims, package labeling ultimately has a negligible impact on purchasing habits, preferences and decision making.

When asked directly about label influence, 50% of respondents said it was "very important" or "important" that companies provide accurate sustainability information on their packaging. However, when asked whether they were likely to change their purchasing habits to support companies that made accurate and sustainable claims, 45% disagreed (or Strongly Disagreed). Further reinforcing this finding is that 55% of respondents disagreed (or Strongly Disagreed) when asked whether they would be willing to pay more for a product with accurate and verifiable sustainability claims.

Of note, Fig 4 results seemingly contradict these aforementioned findings, in that more than 50% of respondents said they would be more willing to purchase a product if its sustainability claims were easy to understand and verify. While it is not clear why this discrepancy exists, this finding could suggest that under a scenario with "all things being equal" (i.e. price, quality of product etc.), consumers would prefer to purchase the product with sustainability claims that were easy to understand and verify. Additional research is needed to better understand this inconsistency in the results.

Another potential barrier to the impact of packaging sustainability claims on purchasing decisions is the perceived lack of availability of products. A combined total of 51% (those who "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree") indicate a perceived shortage of products with credible sustainability claims. This is a significant majority and implies that more than half of the consumers are not satisfied with the current offerings. This could point to disillusionment with existing sustainability claims, a demand for more such products, or a combination of both. The fact that more than half of the respondents are not convinced there are enough products with accurate and verifiable sustainability claims suggests a gap in the market. Consumers are

increasingly aware of environmental issues and often seek products aligned with their values. The results indicate a potential for brands to fill this gap by improving the transparency and accuracy of their sustainability claims.

Consumer desire for accurate, verifiable sustainability claims

Fig 7.

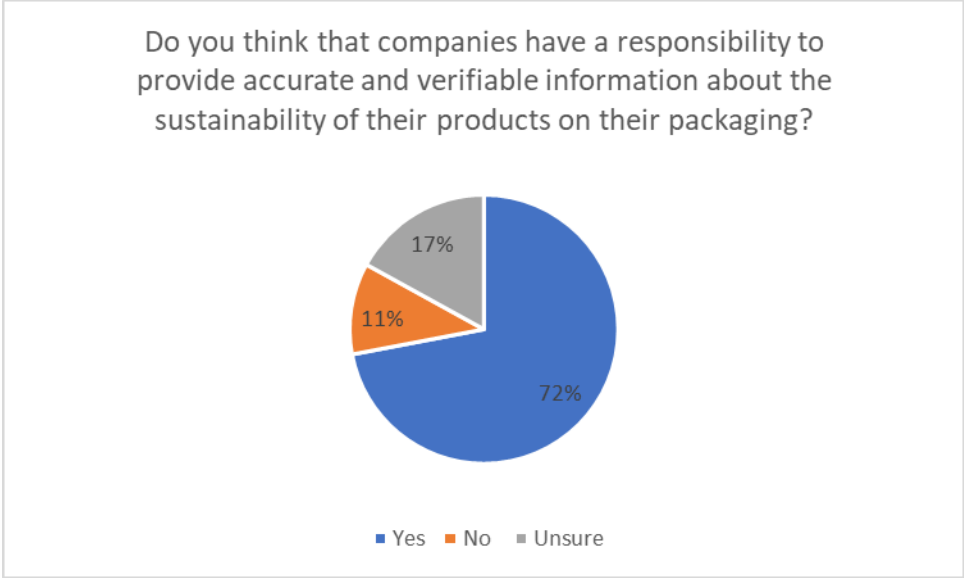


Fig 8.

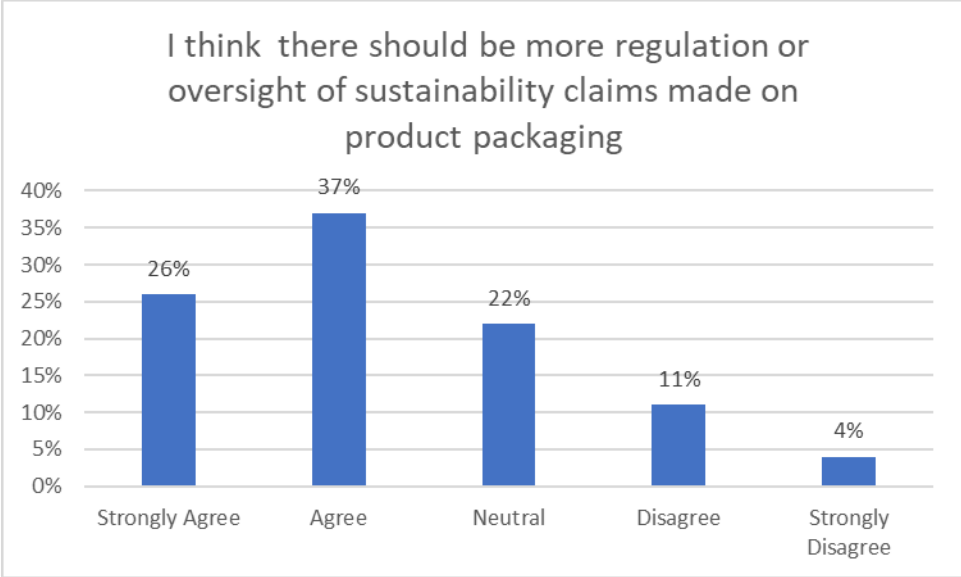


Fig 9.

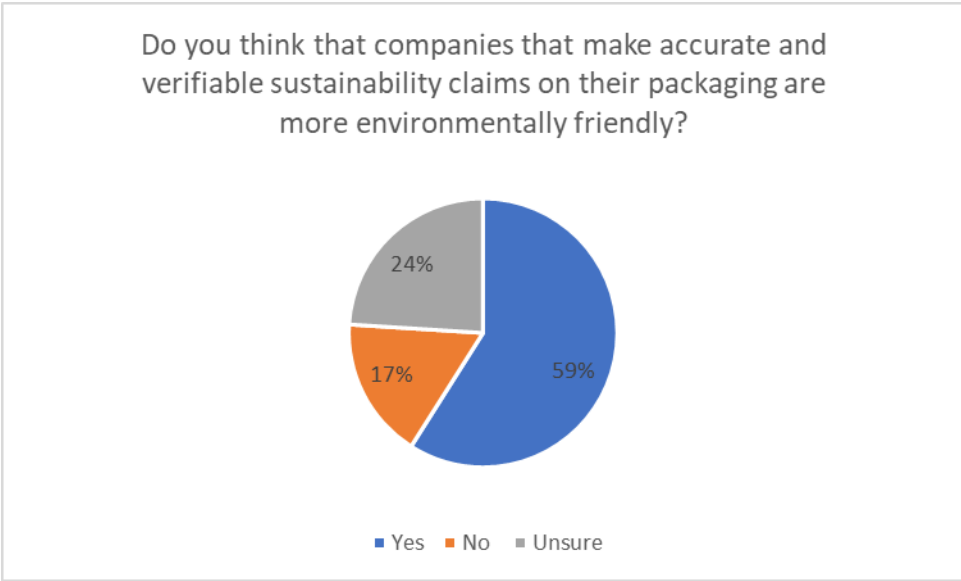


Fig 10.

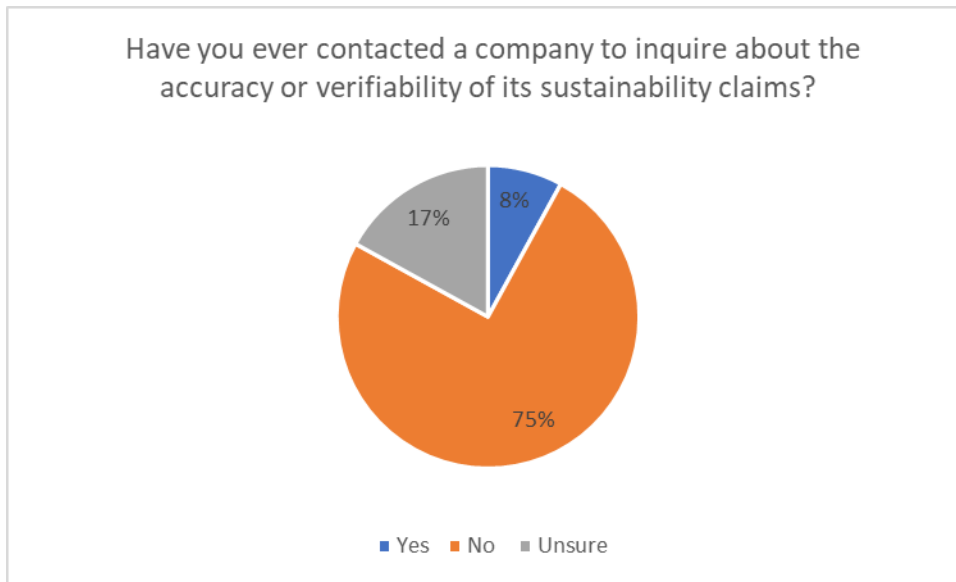
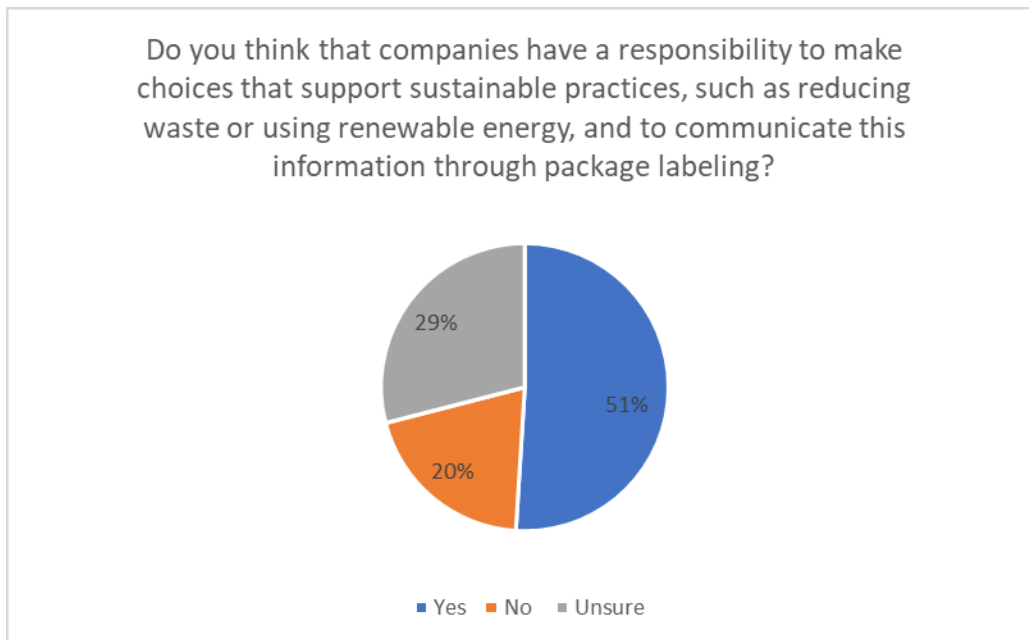


Fig 11.



The survey results reveal a strong desire amongst many consumers for accurate and verifiable sustainability claims on product packaging. 72% of respondents believe companies have a responsibility to provide accurate and verifiable sustainability information on packaging, while 61% think there should be more regulation and oversight of sustainability claims. Additionally, 58% said it is "very important" that companies make accurate claims on packaging, indicating it is a high priority for most consumers.

Results in Fig 9 also suggest that the majority of respondents (59%) view companies that make accurate and verifiable sustainability claims on their packaging as more environmentally friendly and responsible. A prevailing theme throughout the survey results is that consumers have both an expectation that companies should make truthful packaging claims, and that those that do are seen more favorably.

Only 21% of respondents clearly agree that companies have a responsibility to reduce their environmental impact, even if it results in higher costs. The majority of respondents (51%) indicated that they were either unsure, or needed more information in order to provide an informed answer. The results show that the public is not overwhelmingly convinced that companies should incur higher costs to lessen their environmental impact, particularly if those costs are passed along to consumers.

Of note, despite the strong desire expressed by consumers about the accuracy and verifiability of labeling claims, only 8% of respondents indicated that they have contacted a company in the past to inquire about label accuracy, and only 40% indicated a future willingness to do so. While many consumers value truthfulness in sustainability marketing, some ambiguity remains on how best to achieve it. Additionally, the moderate individual action in verifying claims indicates there is room to further empower consumers to take steps towards label accountability.

Overall, the prevailing theme is a substantial consumer appetite for honest sustainability labeling, though progress may require both greater consumer awareness and collaboration amongst stakeholders to implement standards and oversight. The data clearly shows strong consumer demand for trustworthy sustainability information on packages. The vast majority believe companies have an obligation to provide transparent, validated claims about environmental attributes. This reflects growing scrutiny of "greenwashing" and awareness of vagueness or exaggeration in some marketing language. Several factors likely contribute to the prevailing desire for rigorous sustainability labeling practices:

- Increased environmental consciousness - Consumers are more attuned to ecological impacts of products and production. They expect packaging to reflect this responsibly.
- Lack of current oversight - With limited regulation, misleading claims can proliferate. Stricter standards are sought to ensure accuracy.
- Confusing terminology - Terms like "natural" or "green" on packages can mean different things to different companies. Uniform definitions and criteria are needed.
- Social influence - As sustainability becomes more mainstream, consumers face greater peer and societal pressure to purchase responsibly. Reliable labels enable this.

While most consumers want truthful labeling, views differ on how to achieve it. Some prefer voluntary industry action while others want regulation. Respondents also demonstrated varying willingness to verify claims themselves through direct company contact or independent personal research.

Realizing the public's expectations will require multi-faceted collaboration, and companies must commit to transparency on standards and life cycle impacts. Policymakers need to develop consistent guidelines and requirements for claims. Watchdog groups can expand claim verification services, while consumers must be empowered to demand change through choices and civic pressure. Little doubt exists around the public's appetite for honest, vetted sustainability packaging claims. However, meeting this demand will require coordinated efforts between stakeholders to audit, educate, standardize, and innovate. Activating consumers as partners in this ecosystem is essential to driving progress.

Consumer Knowledge About Labeling

Fig 12

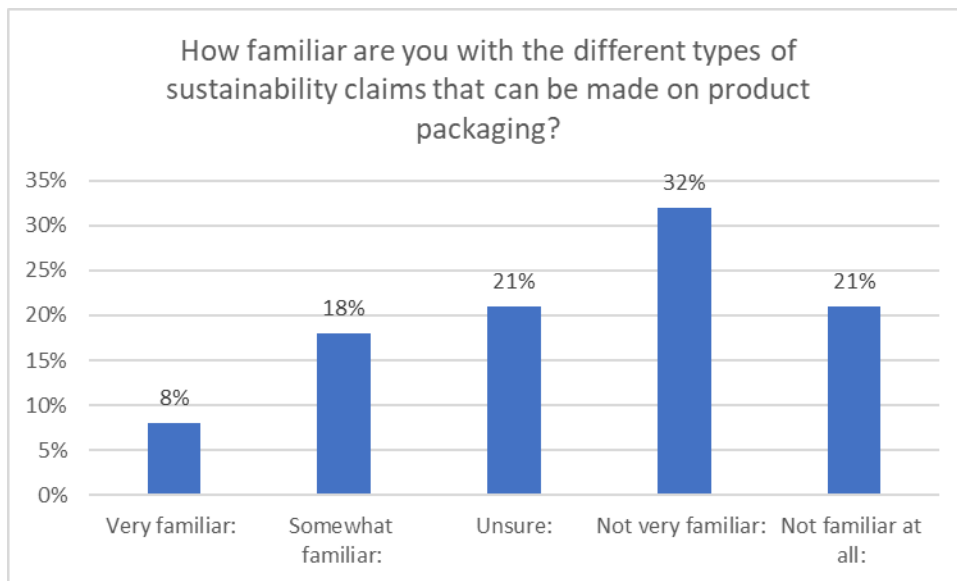


Fig 13

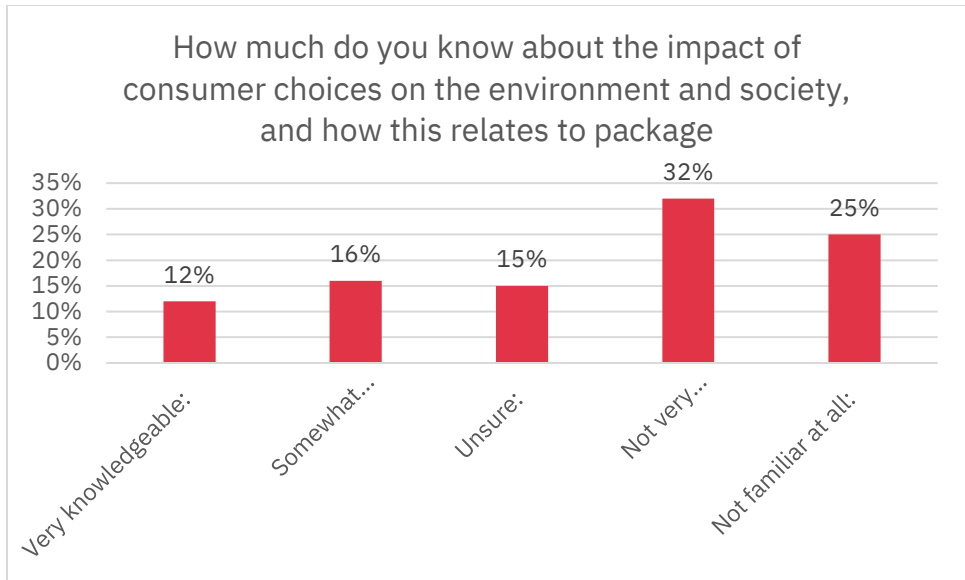
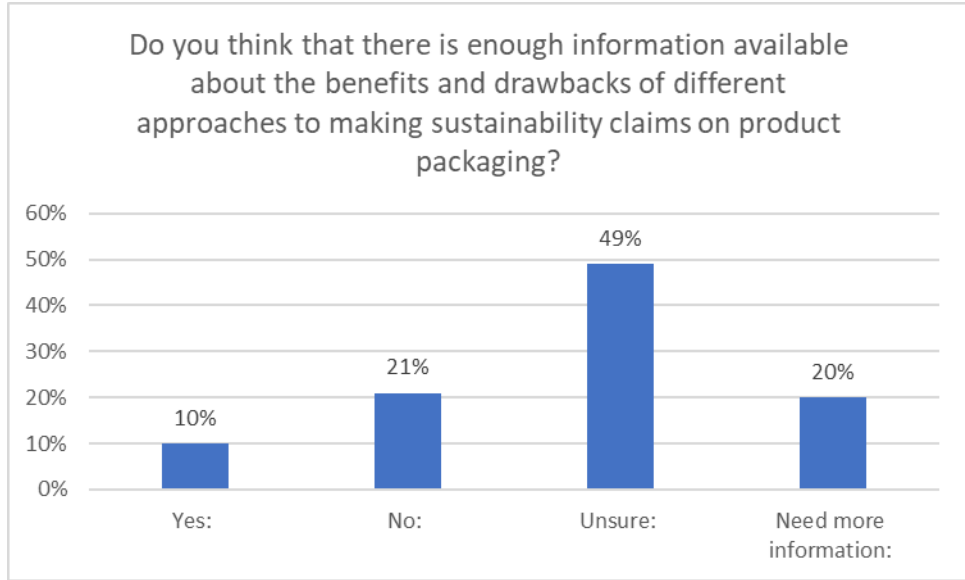


Fig 14



As shown in figures 12 – 14, the survey results reveal limited to moderate consumer familiarity and knowledge when it comes to sustainability labeling terminology and practices. When asked directly, only 8% of respondents said they were "very familiar" with the different types of sustainability claims and information that companies include on packaging. More than 40% of respondents said they were not familiar with what sustainability claims were referencing, what the source of the information was and whether that information was credible.

Reflecting this, only 12% considered themselves "very knowledgeable" about the impact of consumer product choices on sustainability issues, while 25% admitted to having "no knowledge" on this topic. Additionally, only 15% felt "very informed" on the potential benefits and drawbacks of different approaches to sustainability labeling, while the vast majority of

respondents were unsure or required additional information before being able to make an informed decision.

Despite relatively low levels of label awareness among respondents, 18% reported discussing labeling and sustainability claims "very often" with others. 21% of respondents also indicated that media stories on these topics influence their opinions and behaviors as it pertains to purchasing decisions. This suggests that while general familiarity with sustainability labeling is moderate, some consumers are engaged with the topic through word-of-mouth and media information sources. Overall, the results indicate an opportunity to improve consumers' sustainability literacy through expanded education and resources. Even moderately increased knowledge could empower buying decisions that help drive businesses towards more ethical marketing and manufacturing practices.

The data makes clear that household understanding of sustainability labeling is currently limited. Less than 10% of respondents indicated that they felt very informed or knowledgeable about labeling practices, terminologies, and impacts. This leaves most consumers disempowered to fully apply labeling in purchasing decisions. Several factors likely contribute to the reported knowledge gaps:

- Complexity of standards - The diversity of labeling schemes (Fairtrade, organic, VOC-free, etc.) creates confusion on meaning and verification.
- Vague terminology - Terms like "natural" or "green" on packages are ambiguous without clear standards. This fosters misunderstanding.
- Information overload - With exhaustive product details, sustainability labels can get overlooked. Relevant info gets lost amidst other marketing.
- Consumer education - Most people lack training on how to read and leverage sustainability labels effectively when shopping.
- Perceived tradeoffs - Some consumers may avoid researching labels closely to avoid complicating or compromising purchase priorities.

While familiarity is currently limited, promising channels exist to boost knowledge. Optimizing information pathways through compelling social media campaigns and word-of-mouth activation can expand reach among the public. Labeling guides, product rating systems, and retail staff training provide other avenues to equip shoppers with literacy to evaluate claims.

Even moderate knowledge gains across consumer segments could have meaningful influence in shifting purchase decisions towards sustainable products. Closing persistent information gaps remains imperative to realize labeling's immense potential to shape consumption habits and business accountability. Simplified, transparent language and messaging is key to empowering sustainable consumerism through labeling.

Support for more education and oversight

Fig 15.

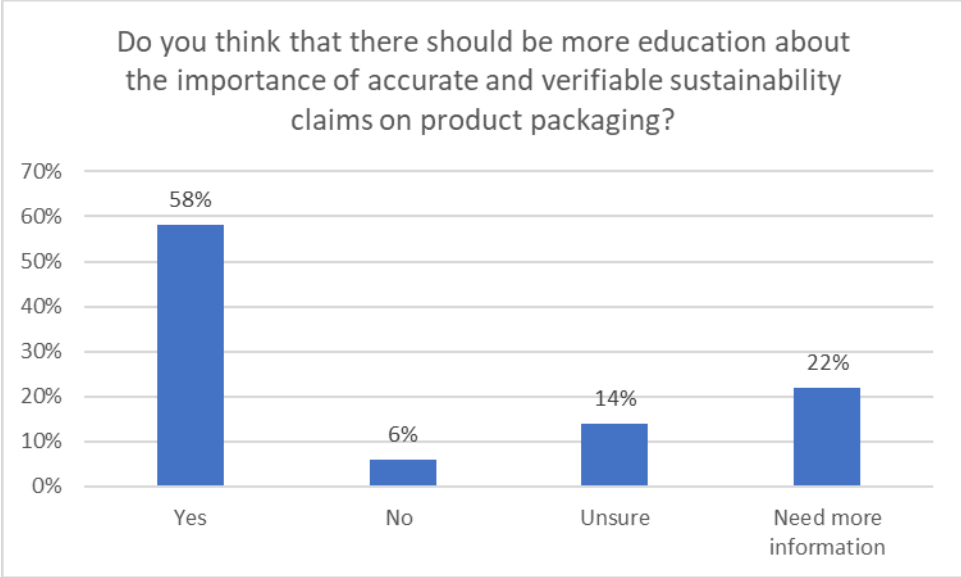
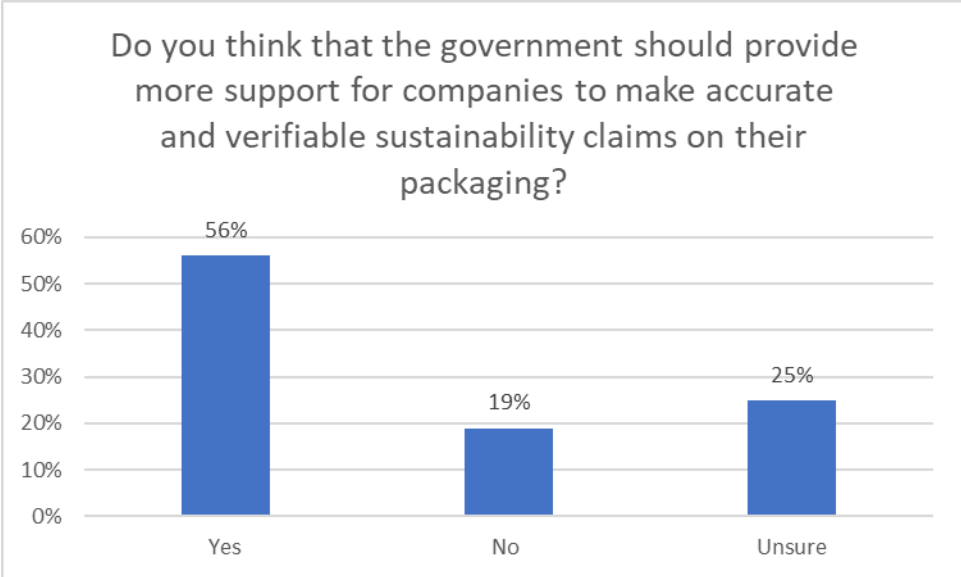


Fig 16.



The survey results show strong support for increased education around sustainability labeling on consumer products. 61% of respondents either "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that there should be more education about the importance of accurate and verifiable claims. Only 11% disagreed with this statement. This indicates that a majority of consumers feel their knowledge on this topic is lacking.

As shown in Fig 16 – 56% of respondents felt that government should provide more support for companies to make accurate and verifiable packaging sustainability claims. There is a clear majority in favor of the government providing more support to companies. This indicates that a significant portion of the public perceives a role for government intervention in the area of environmental claims. This support may stem from a belief that government oversight could enhance the accuracy and trustworthiness of sustainability claims, and perhaps play a role in helping educate consumers to make more informed choices.

Consumers widely recognize the need for both greater sustainability literacy and standards around environmental claims in advertising, but work remains to build consensus around specific policy solutions while motivating the public to actively participate in shaping regulatory reforms. Even with existing uncertainty, the desire for progress provides momentum to address the "greenwashing" around sustainability promises.

The data clearly demonstrates strong consumer demand for increased sustainability education and awareness. The public recognition that expanded labeling literacy is needed reflects growing eco-consciousness and desire for knowledge to guide responsible purchases. Consumers understand their current limitations in navigating diverse label terminologies and standards. Targeted learning programs, product rating systems, and retail staff training provide promising ways to address knowledge gaps.

The survey finds that support for additional education spans demographics - while segments like youth or urban dwellers show higher eco-literacy, demand for additional information to make sustainably informed purchasing decisions is observed across all groups. Even consumers who are less engaged now recognize the need to expand their awareness. Beyond general sustainability facts, consumers want training on deciphering specific labels especially since unfamiliar jargon like "natural" or "free-range" can be confusing. Education needs to decode terminology and turn the language used by certifying bodies available to the layperson. Messaging should emphasize personal benefits of label literacy - smarter purchases, health/wellness, saving money etc. Appealing to self-interest and tangible impacts can motivate learning.

Support for stricter regulations also stems from the lack of oversight currently allowing ambiguous or misleading claims to proliferate. Without accountability, companies face limited consequences for exaggeration and omission on labels. Mandatory verification, fines for violations, and uniform messaging rules could help curb greenwashing. However, differences emerge on preferred regulatory approaches:

- Voluntary industry action - Some believe brands will self-regulate with consumer pressure. But this risks perpetuating the status quo.
- Government oversight - Top-down standards would ensure compliance but risk being ponderous, complex, or watered-down.
- Third-party audits - Independent consumer watchdog groups could provide certification, but this relies on voluntary brand participation.

A hybrid model may be optimal to share accountability across stakeholders. In this model, the role of government would be to set baseline standards and provides enforcement mechanisms with heavy penalties while auditing groups certify adherence to these standards. Finally, consumers would apply pressure through their purchasing choices.

While consumers clearly want progress, executing on their preferences will require nuance. Any solutions must balance simplicity and flexibility to avoid over-burdening brands, especially small businesses, while avoiding lax or vague standards. Strong targeted education is imperative either way to empower public contribution. Achieving real change remains a shared responsibility.

Consumer Activism and Influence

Fig 17.

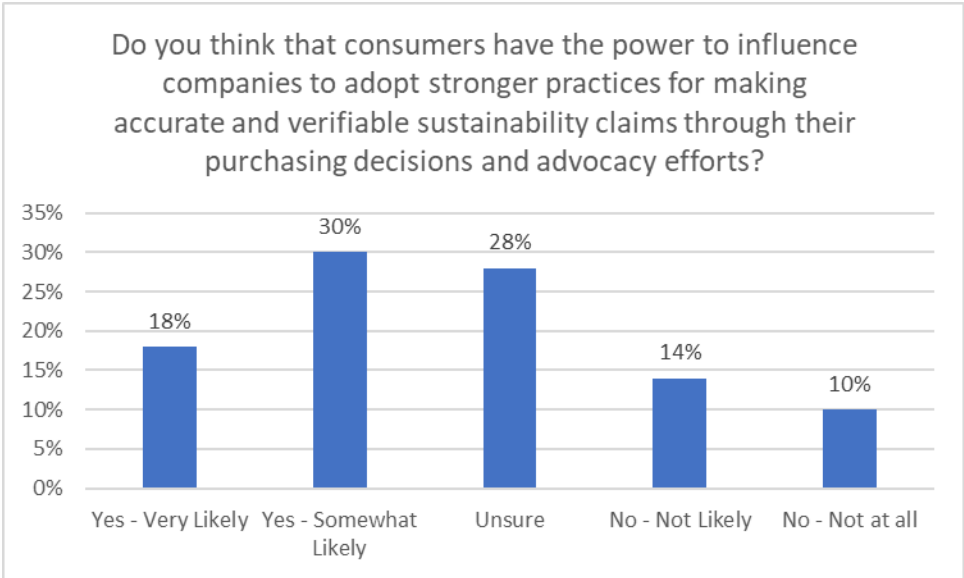


Fig 18.

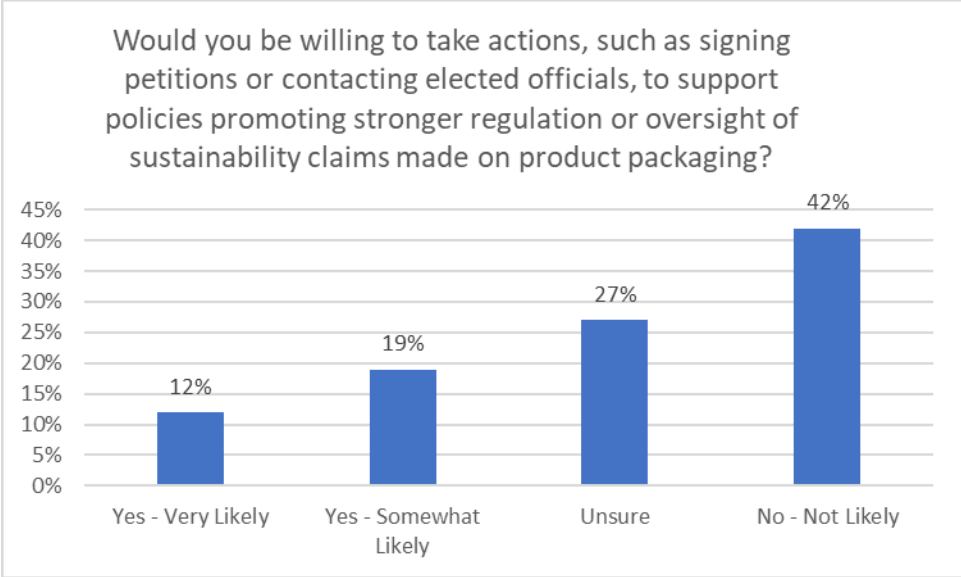
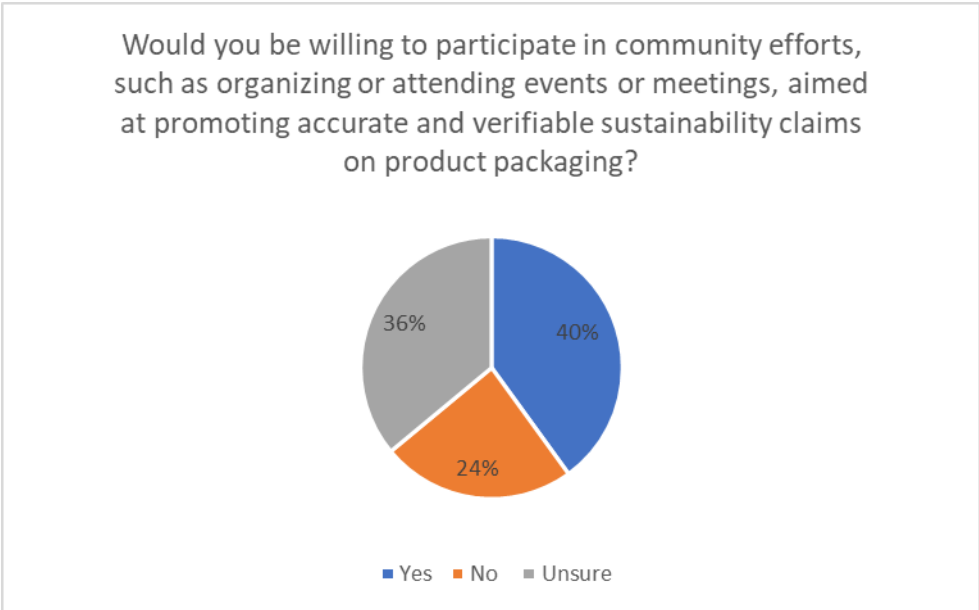


Fig 19.



The survey results indicate a prevailing belief that consumer purchasing choices and advocacy have the power to shift corporate sustainability practices for the better. 59% of respondents either "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that consumers can influence companies to adopt stronger labeling practices through their buying decisions. The belief in consumer influence also translates to civic engagement - 31% of respondents said they would be willing to contact elected officials or advocate for improved labeling regulations, while 40% were willing to participate in promotional initiatives around sustainability labeling.

Increased activism could amplify public pressure on industry and government to develop meaningful standards and oversight around environmental advertising. This survey reveals an

underlying confidence that consumers have both the pocketbook and political power to drive sustainability progress. This perception likely makes the public more receptive to outreach aimed at mobilizing marketplace and policy engagement on these issues. Several factors likely contribute to this perception of consumer power:

- Values-based shopping - People recognize the rising demand for ethical products.
- "Dollar voting" - Brand messaging touts the ability to impact change through purchases.
- Issue awareness - Media coverage of "greenwashing" helps build efficacy.

However, there are discrepancies between attitudes and actual behaviors:

- Only 19% say labels greatly inform shopping choices now.
- Just 10% have contacted companies about labeling concerns.
- There is a limited willingness to shift purchasing habits based on labeling, despite favorable attitudes, the follow-through is lower.

This gap suggests barriers exist that limit consumer activation:

- Price, convenience and habits can override sustainability.
- Confusing "green" terminology on labels inhibits informed decisions.
- Doubts about whether individual actions influence large firms.
- Time constraints to thoroughly research sustainability claims.

Strategies like consumer education, product rating systems and recycling access could better enable values-driven shopping. If systems made sustainable choices easy and clear, consumers would likely follow through on their perceived power far more. Messaging must also reinforce collective impact.

Consumers recognize their potential influence but do not fully act on it yet. Unlocking this latent power requires reducing friction through thoughtful design and empowerment approaches. Sustainable shopping should become the default, not the complication. This can shift passive support into truly transformative purchasing.

In summary, the potential for lifestyle and shopping evolutions exists amongst a portion of consumers. However, realizing this potential may depend on overcoming entrenched behaviors through effective engagement, education, and enabling policies. The data reveals a tentative willingness to altering shopping habits and lifestyles to back products with responsible labeling claims. However, uncertainty and barriers limit follow-through currently. Several factors explain the expressed tentative willingness:

- General eco-consciousness and values motivate intention to act ethically.
- Awareness of "greenwashing" outrages environmentally-minded consumers.
- Messaging touts consumer power to drive change through purchases.

However, several obstacles inhibit translating willingness into action:

- Higher prices remain a deal-breaker for some, especially for low-income demographics.

- Time limitations make label research and habit changes feel burdensome.
- Confusion persists around labeling meaning and product impacts.
- Entrenched shopping routines and favorite brands anchor old habits.
- Doubts about whether individual acts matter against market forces.

Bridging the intention-action gap requires removing friction through:

- Financial incentives like subsidies and rebates to offset costs.
- Rating systems that quickly communicate product sustainability.
- Defaults like eco-friendly options already on store shelves.
- Messaging that reinforces collective consumer leverage.
- Celebrating small steps to support self-efficacy.

With thoughtful design and enablement strategies, latent consumer willingness could convert into impactful shopping and lifestyle evolutions supporting verified sustainability claims. But the data makes clear this requires active empowerment, not passive hope.

Personal and Social Values

Fig. 20

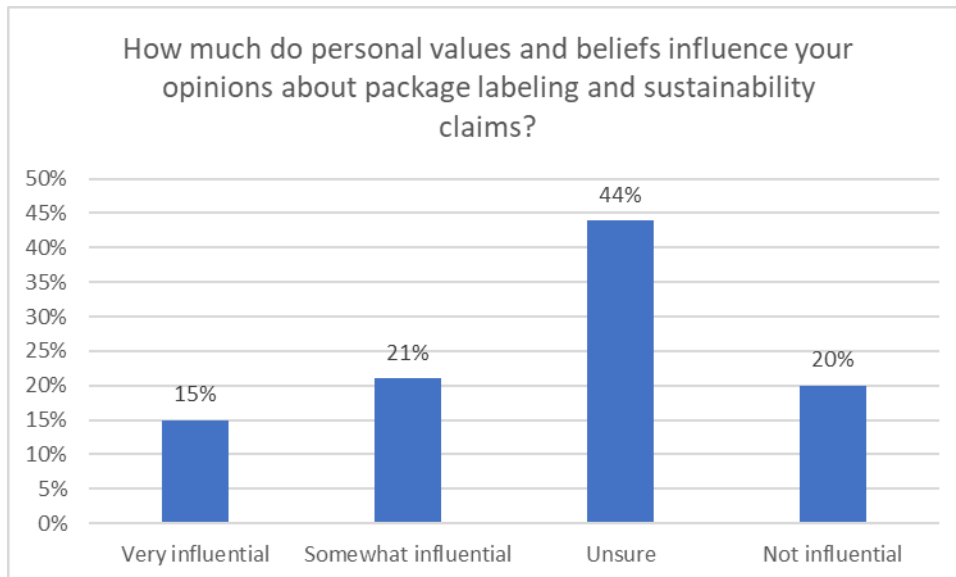


Fig 21

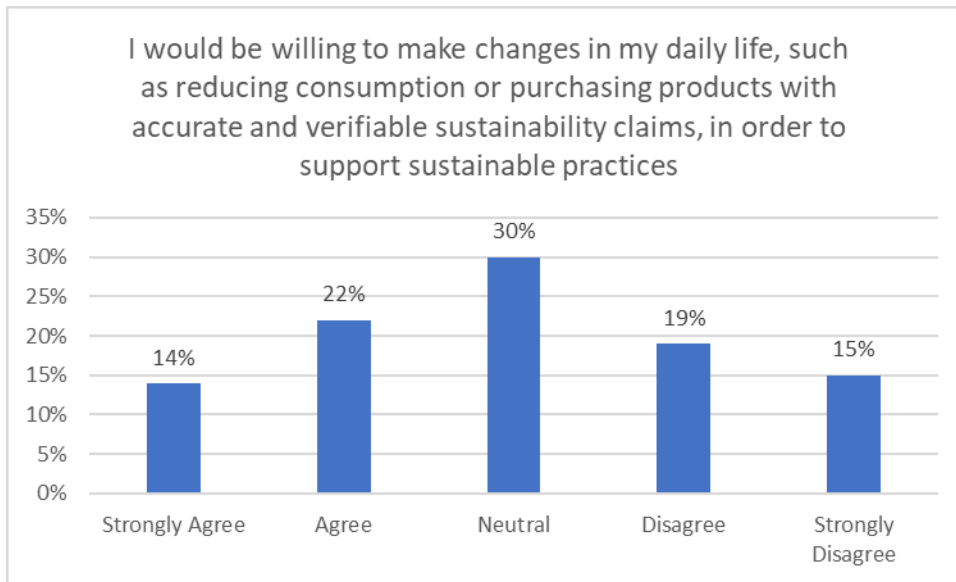


Fig 22

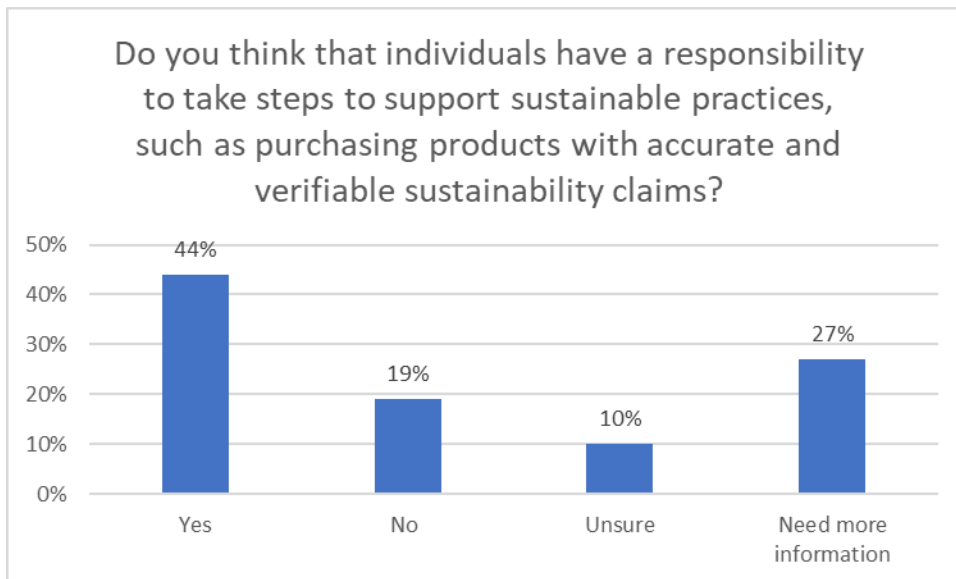
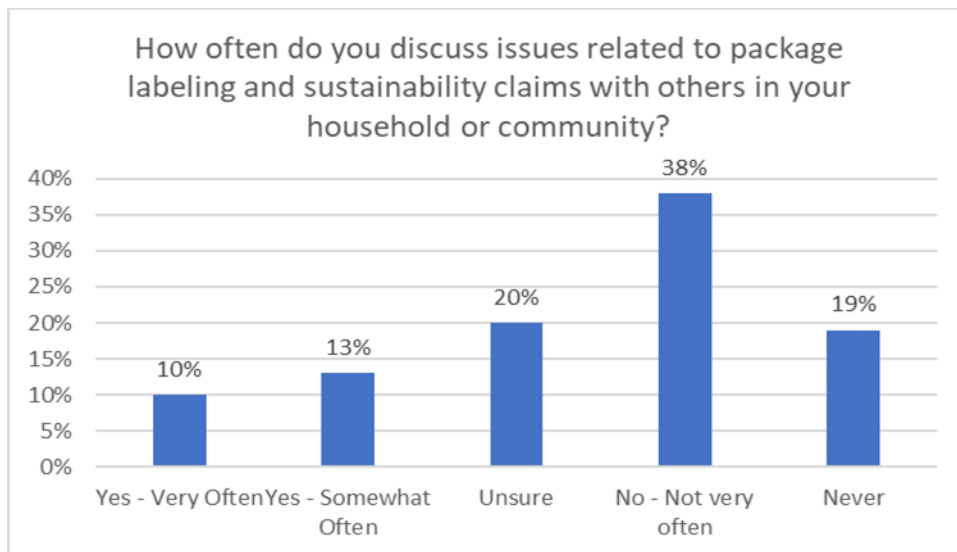


Fig 23



The survey results indicate personal values and social influences play a major role in shaping consumer perspectives on sustainability labeling. When asked directly, 36% of respondents said personal values and beliefs heavily influence their opinions of product packaging and claims. 20% said values were not very impactful. Additionally, 39% of respondents reported social, cultural, and environmental issues as very important in their purchase selections.

On changing daily habits, 36% of respondents were ready to reduce consumption or adjust lifestyles to support sustainable practices. However, almost two thirds of respondents remained unwilling or unsure about making sacrifices surrounding consumption levels.

The data also highlights the role of social dynamics. 29% said they discuss labeling issues "very often" with family and friends. And 38% reported media stories shape their related views "very much." However, only 8% had contacted companies to verify claims, indicating personal action does not always follow values. And 27% remained uncertain if social issues should impact purchases, suggesting barriers exist.

In summary, abstract principles and social responsibilities appear to shape consumer thinking on sustainability labeling considerably. But translating this into behavior change could require reducing obstacles through targeted education on personal impact and community-level advocacy. Overall, the survey indicates worldviews and social influences are prime drivers of consumer orientations on these issues. Messaging and engagement should tie into existing value sets while leveraging peer pressure and collective action. The data clearly shows personal values and social factors heavily influence consumer views on labeling issues. Regarding values, several key points emerge and reveal a gap where principles only partially translate to action:

- 43% say ethical principles directly shape their opinions of sustainability marketing claims.
- 39% view social/environmental issues as very important for purchase choices.
- Less than 10% of respondents have contacted firms to verify alignment with values.

Overall, the analysis confirms sustainability is still largely an abstract concept for many. Progress requires translating awareness into tangible, community-powered impact supportive of personal principles. This process of localization and socialization can unlock the latent power of values and peer dynamics to drive labeling progress.

Consumer Optimism

Fig 24.

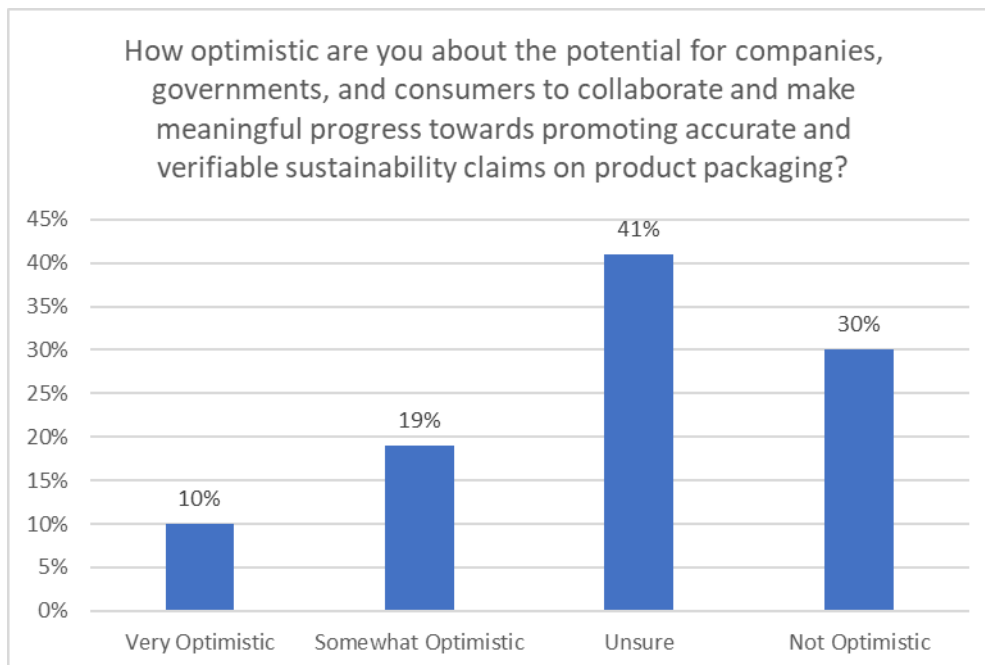


Fig 25.

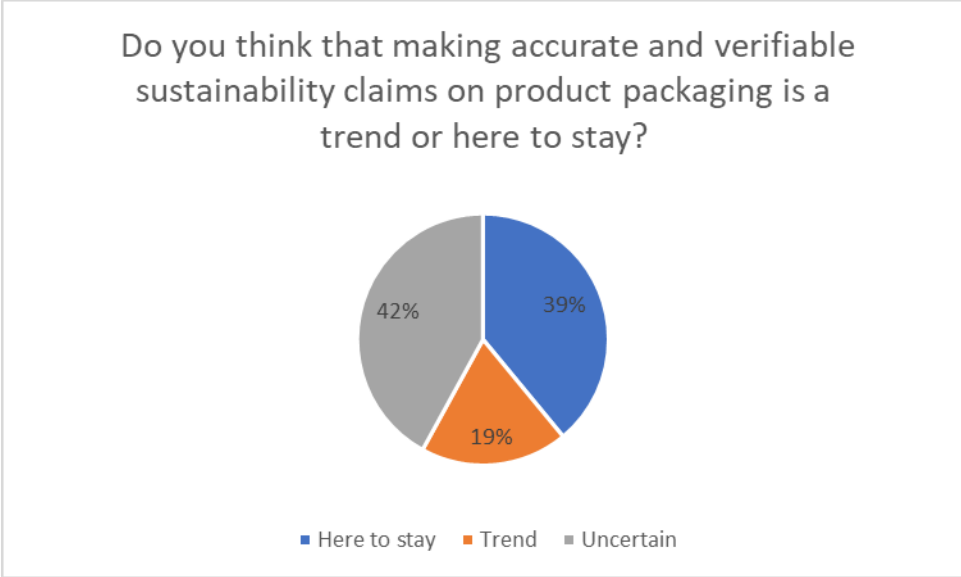


Fig 26



The survey reveals a cautious optimism amongst consumers about the potential for progress on accurate and verifiable sustainability labeling. When asked directly, 30% reported feeling "very" or "somewhat" optimistic that companies, government, and consumers can collaborate to improve labeling practices. However, 30% were neutral and another 40% were pessimistic about progress. While the attitudes were shown to be wary, the belief is that this movement is temporary as only 18% of respondents felt verifiable labeling was definitively "here to stay", while 23% saw it as just a passing trend. The largest portion of respondents (42%) remained

uncertain about the lasting power of this shift, particularly in the absence of additional information.

While willingness to pay premiums for products with verifiable sustainability claims was limited, 31% of respondents did believe individual consumers have a responsibility to support sustainable practices like purchasing verified products, while 41% of respondents felt companies have a duty to reduce their environmental footprints, even if faced with higher costs.

While skepticism exists, a significant portion of consumers remain hopeful about the prospect for measurable improvements to sustainability advertising and marketing. Capturing this optimism through awareness campaigns and incentivizing responsible business practices could help accelerate progress. However, unrealistic expectations also need to be balanced with the understanding that substantive change requires time and shared effort.

Several factors contribute to the measured hope expressed by respondents:

- Values-driven shopping trends signify growing public pressure.
- Media coverage of "greenwashing" outrages environmentally-minded consumers.
- Messaging from brands touts responsibility and progress.

However, cynicism persists around the feasibility of change, as high costs may limit follow-through on ethical purchase intentions and almost 40% remain pessimistic about collaborative progress between stakeholders.

Channeling hope into action requires acknowledging doubts while reinforcing progress:

- Celebrate labeling transparency milestones by companies.
- Share case studies of consumer and NGO advocacy moving the needle.
- But set realistic expectations around the gradual pace of systems change.
- Provide affordable sustainable options and financial incentives to reduce cost barriers.
- Spotlight inter-sector collaborations like industry-NGO partnerships.

Overall, the data shows guarded optimism currently predominates consumer views. Capturing this hopeful sentiment through social proof, affordability and collective action is key to driving steady if incremental labeling advancements.

Key Recommendations

Here are some key recommendations for different stakeholder groups based on the analysis of the package labeling survey:

For Brands and Companies

Brands should increase transparency of sustainability claims through additional details and third-party certifications to match consumer demand for more voluntary sustainability verified claims from organizations. Companies also need to educate the public more on sustainability

practices and what different label claims mean through awareness campaigns and marketing communications. Together, prominently displaying verified claims on packaging coupled with appropriate education can enable conscious consumer choice. Creating channels for consumers that encourage outreach for packaging information would also reduce friction.

Additionally, evaluating innovations in low-waste packaging and circular business models can help reduce environmental footprints. Brands should then communicate these efforts through credible sustainability claims on products. Collaborating with other stakeholders can advance standards and systems for verified claims.

For Policymakers and Regulators

Governments should implement stronger regulations and enforcement to prevent misleading or ambiguous sustainability claims. Clear guidelines and standards for environmental marketing terms are needed to reduce the barriers consumers are finding in understanding the landscape. Policymakers can also develop mandatory certifications for on-package claims, provide incentives for voluntary adoption by brands, and increase the access of these types of information to consumers which would lead to a model that promotes accountability across stakeholders.

Consumer education programs focused on label reading and interpreting claims must expand. Investing in infrastructure and systems to improve recycling and reuse access for households is also critical to empower sustainable purchase behaviors.

For Consumers and Community Groups

Consumers should take time to read packaging and research sustainability claims when shopping to make informed choices. Discussing labeling issues with peers can raise collective awareness and expectations. Supporting grassroots initiatives that expand access to reusable and refillable product options provides civic leverage. Providing feedback to companies and lawmakers demanding verified claims and accountability applies important pressure. Choosing certified and verified brands signals that sustainability matters in purchase decisions.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this survey provides important insights into current consumer attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors related to sustainability labeling on product packaging. The results reveal moderate levels of label reading and influence on purchasing decisions, indicating significant room for improvement in consumer education and label design to activate selections based on sustainability claims.

While most respondents expressed desire for accurate, verifiable claims from brands, familiarity with labeling practices remains limited and oversight is sought to ensure accountability. Personal values and social responsibility shape views considerably, but practical barriers inhibit sustainable actions for many.

The data shows guarded optimism that progress can be made through collaboration between companies, government, and the public. However, concrete engagement remains modest. Bridging the intention-action gap will require reducing obstacles through incentives, awareness building, and simplifying activist options.

Key recommendations include companies transparently displaying verified claims while educating consumers on meanings. Policymakers need to implement standards and regulations with strict enforcement. Consumers should research and discuss labels while supporting grassroots waste reduction initiatives.

In summary, cultivating collective accountability through smarter systems, education, peer sharing, and incentives can empower the public, align corporate-policy efforts, and deliver transparency and trust in sustainability marketing claims on packages. While a collaborative effort between business, government and the public would require long-term commitment from all these stakeholders, it will enable translating support for sustainability labeling into meaningful everyday impact. This survey provides an insightful measurement of where consumers currently stand to inform strategic next steps.