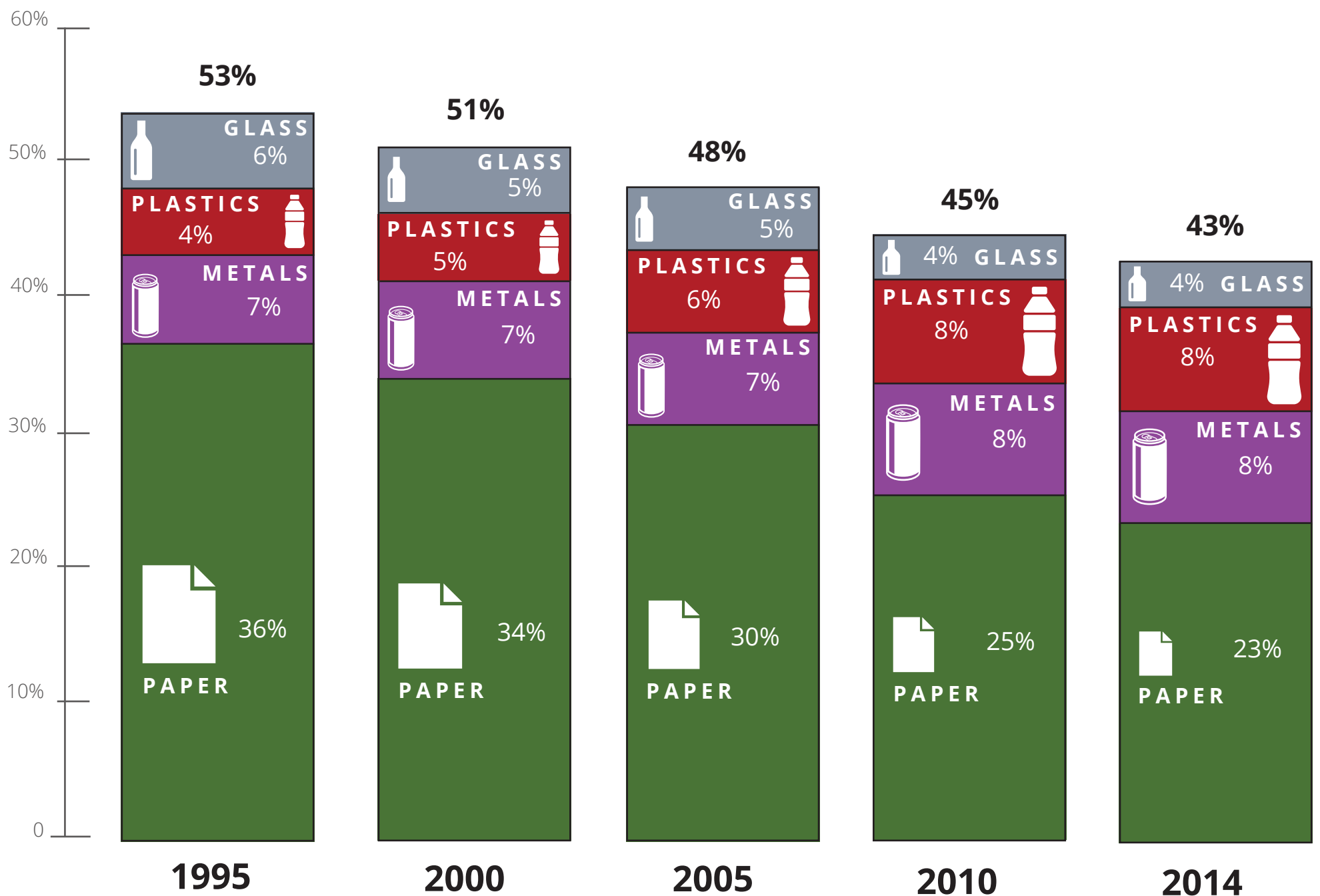


# How Much of Our Waste is Actually Recyclable?\*

Since 1995, the amount of commodity recyclables in the waste stream has fallen 10 points from 53% to 43%.

A recent EREF analysis examined the waste management policies set by state/local agencies, such as recycling and diversion goals. EREF found that states across the U.S. have recycling goals ranging from 10% - 50%.

If every item that was capable of being recycled actually was recycled, could these goals be achieved? This concept, applicable to diversion in general, is known as the theoretical maximum recovery.



**Why the decrease and what does this mean to the waste industry?** The decrease of recyclable material in our waste stream can likely be attributed to many factors, including light-weighting and the reduced demand for paper due to the emergence of online news distribution.

If this trend continues, even if all recyclable material is recycled, many state goals may not be achievable.

\*Waste composition data pulled from the U.S. EPA's Facts and Figures reports and is based on weight.

