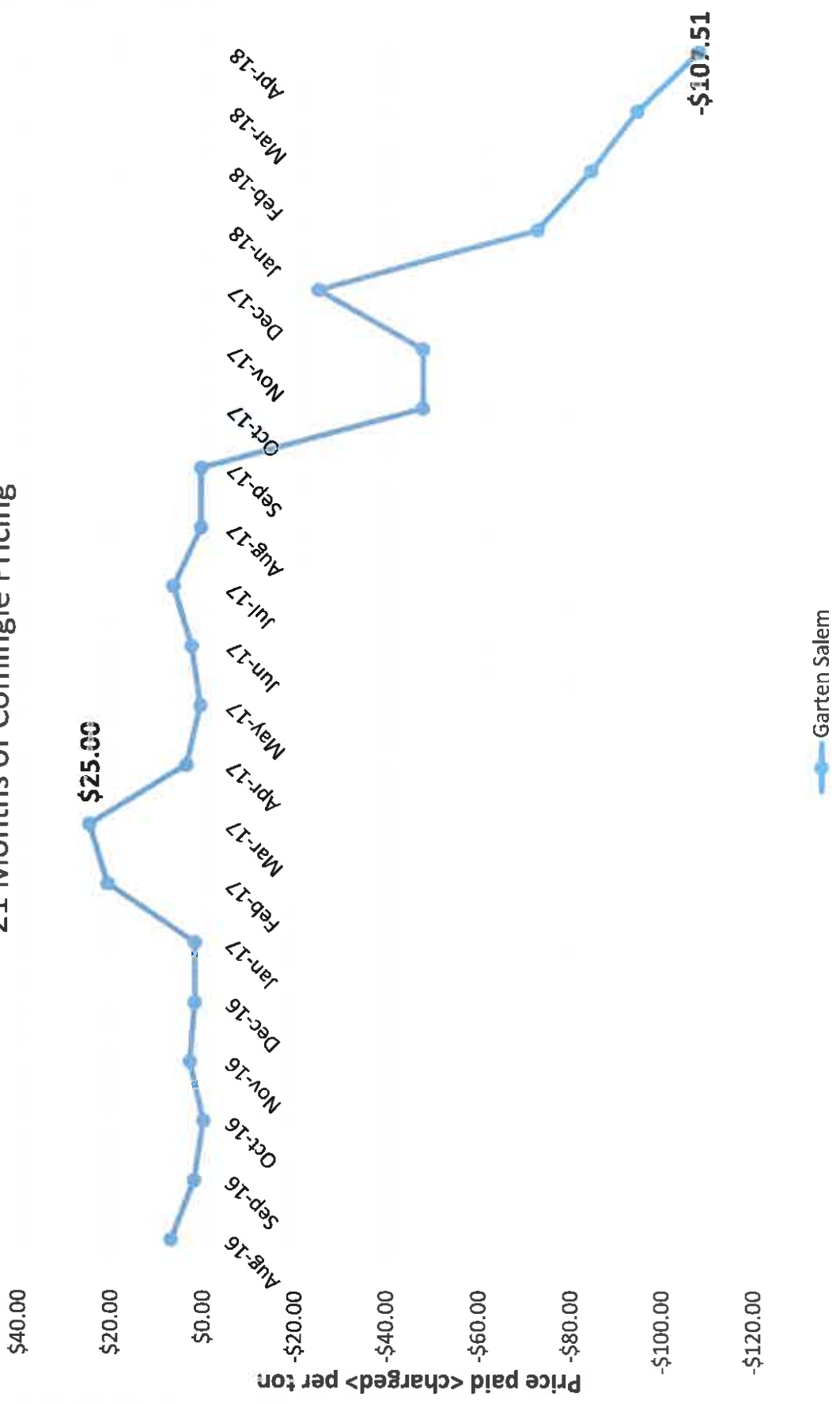


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Portlanders Likely To See A 10 Percent Increase In Garbage Bill

by **Kristian Foden-Vencil** (</contributor/kristian-foden-vencil/>) [Follow](#) OPB April 2, 2018 12:15 p.m. | Portland, Ore.

An emergency increase in Portland's garbage bills is expected to be approved this month because of stricter Chinese recycling requirements.

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China recently required paper and plastic bales to contain no more than 0.5 percent of other garbage.

That's extremely low compared with the general market.

The result is most of the recyclables that U.S. cities produce are being stored as processors search for new markets.

Bruce Walker, with Portland's Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, said they're looking at an emergency increase of about \$3 per month for the average home. "Sorting alone is not going to get us out of this problem," he said.

"It's going to take some additional market development in identifying where else to send some of these materials."

Usually, Portland does not change its rates until the new budget year starts in July. But city staff are urging the City Council to approve higher rates to take

effect in May.

As the market stands, it costs more to deal with recyclables than to put them in a landfill.

The Portland Tribune first reported that since last September, the DEQ has issued 19 rulings allowing one-time or ongoing exceptions that allow recyclables to be buried in landfills. At the end of February that had resulted in 8,305 tons going to the landfill, or about 5 to 6 percent of all materials collected in curbside programs taking commingled materials.

When factoring in other recyclables that are collected separately in Oregon, the DEQ says that amounts to less than 2 percent of the total recycling market.

Garbage bill increases are being considered across Oregon, the rest of the U.S. and Europe in response to the new Chinese requirements.

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