

Memorandum of Support

200+ Groups Support The New York Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act, Senate 4246-a (Senator Harckham)/Assembly 5322-a (Assemblymember Glick)

January 18, 2024

This bill:

Reduces plastic packaging by 50%, gradually over the next twelve years.

Most companies that sell consumer products in New York State would be required to reduce single-use plastic packaging. Remaining packaging would have to be redesigned to be refilled within a refill system or recyclable. Most plastic packaging is currently sent to landfills, burned in incinerators, or is a major source of litter on our streets, parks, and beaches, with 33 billion pounds of plastic pollution entering the ocean each year worldwide.¹ Plastic waste persists in the environment, harming wildlife and breaking down into microplastics that disrupt the food chain and enter human bodies. Microplastics have been found in the air,² drinking water,³ human blood,⁴ lungs,⁵ breast milk,⁶ and placentas.⁷

Reduces pollution in low income communities and/or communities of color (environmental justice communities) where packaging is produced, landfilled, and incinerated.

Plastic production is a major environmental justice, climate change, and human health problem. When burned in incinerators or processed in chemical recycling facilities, plastic waste releases toxic chemicals. New York State relies on 10 aging incinerators to dispose of 15% of the state's municipal solid waste.⁸

Makes packaging safer for all New Yorkers.

The bill prohibits certain toxic chemicals, including: PFAS, vinyl chloride, lead, mercury, formaldehyde, bisphenols, toluene and others which are used in common food packaging, including baby food. These chemicals are carcinogenic, endocrine disrupting, or otherwise harmful to human health.⁹

Save taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars.

Companies will be required to pay for the management and recycling of their packaging waste, rather than taxpayers. New York City proposed spending \$477 million on waste exports in 2025.¹⁰ Nearly 30% of NYC trash is dumped in landfills in the Finger Lakes,¹¹ including the infamous Seneca Meadows landfill.¹² The City of New York also sends waste to Covanta incinerators in Niagara Falls and Newark, NJ.¹³ These communities are also environmental justice communities, and residents in some communities have filed lawsuits alleging that waste burning and dumping violates their rights under the state constitution.¹³

Key statistics

33 billion

lbs of plastic pollution entering the ocean each year worldwide.

\$477 million

proposed for NYC waste exports in 2025.

6%

of plastic waste from the state is actually recycled

12%

of state's overall greenhouse gas emissions

35.7 million

tons of plastic was made in the US in 2020

¹ https://usa.oceana.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/263943_FactSheet_v2-1.pdf

² <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8520475/>

³ <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241516198>

⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/mar/24/microplastics-found-in-human-blood-for-first-time>

⁵ <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/microplastics-in-humans-after-blood-scientists-find-traces-in-the-lungs>

⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/oct/07/microplastics-human-breast-milk-first-time>

⁷ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33395930/>

⁸ <https://dec.ny.gov/sites/default/files/2023-12/finalsswmp2023.pdf>

⁹ <https://www.endocrine.org/news-and-advocacy/news-room/2020/plastics-pose-threat-to-human-health>

¹⁰ Mayor Eric Adams' Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2025. January 16, 2024.

¹¹ <https://www.democratandchronicle.com/story/news/2018/07/06/finger-lakes-landfills-booming-monroe-ontario-and-seneca-counties-residents-angry/754940002/>

¹² <https://abcnews.go.com/US/small-town-big-landfill-new-yorks-largest-garbage/story?id=99571685>

¹³ <https://citylimits.org/2022/09/19/outsourced-nyc-trash-is-causing-a-never-ending-odor-event-upstate-lawsuit-alleges/>



Hugette Roe / Shutterstock.com

Reinvigorate the state's recycling system.

Only 5-6% of plastic waste is actually recycled,¹⁴ and it is most often turned into products or materials of lesser value (downcycled).¹⁵ Because packaging will be reduced, reused, or redesigned to be truly recyclable, recycling facilities will no longer be inundated with worthless plastic waste. New funding will help local governments support effective recycling of metal, paper, cardboard and glass and, most importantly, reuse and refill programs such as dishwashing equipment in schools or public drinking water fountains.

Reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Plastic packaging is a major source of climate pollution. Globally, plastic contributes double the greenhouse gas emissions as the aviation industry¹⁶ and, according to the Climate Action Council Scoping Plan, New York's waste sector accounts for 12% of the state's overall greenhouse gas emissions. In 2020, 35.7 million tons of plastic was made in the U.S.¹⁷ and plastic production is slated to double in the next 20 years¹⁸ - most of it manufactured in communities of color or low income communities in Louisiana, Texas, and Appalachia. These facilities are on track to produce more greenhouse gas emissions than coal plants in the U.S. by 2030.¹⁹ The Climate Action Council Scoping Plan specifically calls for legislation to set up a producer responsibility program for packaging and to "phase out" single-use packaging. The legislature must pass S4246-a/A5322-a in order to meet the State's greenhouse gas reduction goals, as mandated by the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act.

Doesn't allow chemical "recycling" - a false solution advanced by the plastics industry that creates more pollution - to count as recycling.

Chemical recycling has been widely debunked and is a false solution to plastic waste.^{20,21,22,23,24} Chemical recycling technologies mostly use a lot of energy and sometimes chemicals to turn plastic waste into fuel to be burned. They are costly and mostly not effective at turning plastic waste into new plastic.

This bill would save tax dollars and position New York as a global leader in reducing plastic pollution.

¹⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/may/04/us-recycling-plastic-waste>

¹⁵ <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/why-recycling-isnt-the-answer-to-the-plastic-pollution-problem/>

¹⁶ <https://theconversation.com/plastic-warms-the-planet-twice-as-much-as-aviation-heres-how-to-make-it-climate-friendly-116376>

¹⁷ <https://www.epa.gov/facts-and-figures-about-materials-waste-and-recycling/plastics-material-specific-data>

¹⁸ <https://www.epa.gov/facts-and-figures-about-materials-waste-and-recycling/plastics-material-specific-data>

¹⁹ https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5eda91260bbb7e7a4bf528d8/t/616ef29221985319611a64e0/1634661022294/REPORT_The_New-Coal_Plastics_and_Climate-Change_10-21-2021.pdf

²⁰ <https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/chemical-recycling-greenwashing-incineration-ib.pdf>

²¹ https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5eda91260bbb7e7a4bf528d8/t/655791f76ad9bb07d10e1290/1700237880522/10-30-23_Chemical-Recycling-Report_web.pdf

²² https://www.no-burn.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Chemical-Recycling-of-Sachet-Waste_A-Failed-Experiment-2022.pdf

²³ https://www.no-burn.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/CR-Briefing_June-2020.pdf

²⁴ <https://nap.nationalacademies.org/catalog/26132/reckoning-with-the-us-role-in-global-ocean-plastic-waste>

For more information visit [Beyond Plastics.org](https://BeyondPlastics.org) or contact:

Judith Enck,

President, Beyond Plastics,
JudithEnck@Bennington.edu

Alexis Goldsmith

National Organizing Director, Beyond Plastics
AlexisGoldsmith@Bennington.edu

Signed by

Beyond Plastics
Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)
New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG)
League of Women Voters of New York State
Earthjustice
Surfrider Foundation
Only One
Environmental Advocates NY
Mothers Out Front NY
Food & Water Watch
Bronx River Alliance
Greenpeace USA
New York Climate Action Group
New Yorkers for Clean Power
Scenic Hudson
350 Brooklyn
350 NYC
Third Act Upstate New York
Albany Unitarian Churchh, Green Sanctuary Team
All Our Energy
B'nai Sholom Reform Congregation
Bedford 2030
Beloved Earth Community at the Riverside Church
Beyond Plastics Altamont
Beyond Plastics Brooklyn
Beyond Plastics New Paltz
Beyond Plastics Queens
Beyond Plastics Schenectady
Beyond Plastics Sullivan County NY
Beyond Plastics Upper West Side
Big Reuse
Bingo Supermarket
BK ROT
Blueland
Brighton Climate Club
Buy Local, Grow Local
Cafeteria Culture
Cameron Committee for a Safe Environment
Campaign for Renewable Energy
Capital Region Interfaith Creation Care Coalition
Carolina Ocean Alliance
Center for Zero Waste Design
Citizens Concerned About Plastic Pollution
Christ the King Episcopal Church
Church Women United in New York State
Circus Fruits Supermarket
Clean Air Coalition of Greater Ravena Coeymans
Climate Change Awareness and Action
Climate Crisis Policy
Climate Solutions Accelerator
Coalition Against the Rockaway Pipeline
Coalition to Protect New York
Coastal Research & Education Society of Long Island, Inc

Color Brighton Green
Color Fairport Green
Color Irondequoit Green
Color Pittsford Green
Color Rush-Henrietta Green
Color Webster Green
Committee to Preserve the Finger Lakes
Common Ground Compost
CupZero
DeliverZero, Inc
Dispatch Goods, Inc
Don't Trash the Catskills
Downtown East For Progress
Earth & Me
Earth Care Honeoye
East End Action Network
Eco justice, collaborative of the American Baptist churches,
Rochester, Genesee Region
Elmirans and Friends Against Fracking
Energy21 LTD
Environmental Justice Ministry of First Unitarian
Environmental Justice Team
at the 4th Universalist Society in NYC
Finger Lakes ReUse
Fossil Free Tompkins
Fourth Street Food Coop
FrackBusters NY
Friends of the Bay
Gas Free Seneca
Grassroots Environmental Education
Green Education and Legal Fund
Green Inside and Out
Green Party of New York
Green Sanctuary Team
GreeningUSA
A Healthy Blueprint
Healthy Ocean Coalition
Healthy Yards
Home Earth Alliance
Hudson River Sloop Clearwater
IMV CCWG
Indivisible Adirondacks
Indivisible Bethlehem NY
Indivisible Binghamton
Indivisible CCOHOPE
Indivisible Cortland County (ICC)
Indivisible Larchmont/Mamaroneck
Indivisible Mohawk Valley
Indivisible New Rochelle
Indivisible NW Bronx
Indivisible NYCD16
Indivisible Rochester
Indivisible Scarsdale
Indivisible Stephentown

Indivisible YorktownNY
Interfaith Earth Action
It's Easy Being Green
Izzy Zero Waste Beauty
Jewish Congregation of New Paltz Green Committee
John Burroughs Natural History Society
JSA ESG Impact
Just Zero
Kaylaan
KingstonCitizens.org
League of Women Voters of Rensselaer County
League of Women Voters of Saratoga County
League of Women Voters of Schenectady County
League of Women Voters of Tompkins County
League of Women Voters, Albany County
Lights Out Coalition
Long Island Progressive Coalition
Markers For Democracy
Meliora Cleaning Products
Mothers Out Front Dutchess County
Mountain Rise United Church of Christ
Mountain Top Progressives
NAACP-Utica and Oneida County
Nassau Hiking & Outdoor Club
Network for a Sustainable Tomorrow
New York Clinicians for Climate Action
New York Communities for Change
New York Progressive Action Network
News from the Neighborhood
No North Brooklyn Pipeline Alliance
North American Climate, Conservation and Environment
North Fork Environmental Council
North Shore Audubon Society
NY Climate Advocacy Project
NY Water Action
NYC H2O
NYC-Grassroots Alliance
Operation SPLASH
Pachamama Alliance of the Rochester Area
Peconic Baykeeper
Peekskill100
People for a Healthy Environment
People of Albany United for Safe Energy
Plaine Products
Plastic Pollution Coalition
Progressive Schenectady
Protect the Adirondacks! Inc.
Purple Waves
Putnam Progressives
Queens Climate Project
Re:Dish
Rensselaer County Women for Change
Rensselaer Environmental Coalition
Residents Allied for the Future of Tioga
ReWild Long Island
Richmond Democrat Committee
Rise and Resist

Rivers & Mountains Green Faith Circle
Rochester Area Interfaith Climate Action
Rocking the Boat
Rockland Coalition to End the New Jim Crow
Roctricity LLC
Rondout Valley High School Human Rights Club
Sane Energy
Saratoga-Warren-Washington Progressive Action
Save the Great South Bay
Save The River Upper St. Lawrence Riverkeeper
Save The Sound
Seeding Sovereignty
Seneca Falls Environmental Action Committee
Seneca Lake Guardian
Sierra Club Central and Northern New York
Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt, New York
Sisters of St. Joseph
Sixth Street Community Center
South Shore Audubon Society
Stop the Algonquin Pipeline Expansion
Story of Stuff Project
Sunrise Movement NYC
Superzero International, Inc.
Sure We Can
Surfrider Foundation New York City
Surfrider Foundation Niagara Frontier
Sustainability Committee of Town of Henrietta
Sustainable Finger Lakes
Sustainable Putnam
Sustainable Saratoga
A Sustainable Village
Swing Left Target Majority
The Climate Reality Project, Finger Lakes Greater Region NY Chapter
The Climate Reality Project, Western New York Chapter
The Earth Bill Network
The Last Plastic Straw
The Park Church Climate Justice Team
Think Zero LLC
Tompkins County Climate Protection Initiative
Transition Town Port Washington
Turtle Rescue of the Hamptons, Inc.
Ulster Activists
Unitarian Universalist Church of Utica
United For Clean Energy
Uptown Progressive Action
UUDig Community Garden
Waste Administration + Tracking Software (WA+TS)
Watervliet Huddle
We Are One Sullivan
Westchester Alliance for Sustainable Solutions (WASS)
Westchester Peace Action Committee (WESPAC) Foundation, Inc.
Winnakee Land Trust, Inc.
Women Against War
Woodstock Land Conservancy
Zero Waste Capital District