

NEWS RELEASE

Environmental Leaders Deliver More Than 18,000 Signatures To Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins' District Office

Call For Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins to Pass The Packaging Reduction and Recycling Act and Bigger Better Bottle Bill

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Yonkers, NY - Leaders from the environmental organizations Beyond Plastics, Only One, Westchester Alliance for Sustainable Solutions, League of Women Voters Westchester, Bedford 2030, Grassroots Environmental Education, and NYCD16 Indivisible delivered over 18,000 petition signatures to Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins' district office in Yonkers. The groups are urging the state leader to bring to the Senate floor for a vote the Packaging Reduction & Recycling Infrastructure Act (S4246/A5322) and Bigger Better Bottle Bill (S237/A6353) before the Legislature leaves Albany next week.

More than 40% of plastic production is to make single-use items like packaging. Most plastic is not recyclable, and winds up buried in landfills, or burned in incinerators like the Wheelabrator incinerator in Peekskill, along the Hudson River. New York's 10 municipal waste incinerators produce greenhouse gases and other air pollutants and toxic ash. New York City alone spends \$429 million each year to export its waste to incinerators and landfills in other states or to the Finger Lakes in upstate NY.

"As trash incineration continues to exacerbate the public health crisis in environmental justice communities like Peekskill, what we need is strong state legislation that tackles waste at its source and ambitious benchmarks to break our dependency on plastic. We have the opportunity to do this by passing both the Bigger Better Bottle Bill and the Packaging Reduction & Recycling Infrastructure Act this coming week, but our fight will be in vain if we do not hold the line against the industry's worst poison pills masked as reasonable compromise. False solutions such as plastic chemical "recycling" will create new loopholes that ultimately keeps us reliant on plastic, and enable the chemical industry to make profit while polluting and poisoning our communities without any consequence," said **Vanessa Agudelo, Organizer for Westchester Alliance for Sustainable Solutions (WASS)**.

The production, use, and disposal of plastic is one of the greatest environmental and health threats of our time. Not only are plastics turning our ocean into a watery landfill, plastics also pose a threat to our ability to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. Made from chemicals

and fossil fuels, plastics produce climate-warming greenhouse gases from extraction to disposal. The New York Climate Law scoping plan specifically calls on the Legislature to pass a strong extended producer responsibility bill this year to fulfill the state's climate and environmental justice obligations.

"It is time to turn off the tap of single-use plastic packaging and reduce toxics in packaging. This comprehensive bill does just that, while protecting environmental justice communities," **said Dawn Henry of Beyond Plastics.**

"The Bronx is hard hit by plastic pollution and would benefit greatly from adoption of these new policies. As a member of the Bronx Solid Waste Advisory Board, we need Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie and Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins to bring these bills up for a vote. Our communities deserve to be cleaner and greener. These policies will help achieve that," **said Dior St. Hillaire, Bronx SWAB Chair.**

The Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act (A5322/S4246) would require companies to cut their plastic packaging in half in 12 years and redesign what's left to make it reusable, refillable, or actually recyclable. When packaging is discarded, the bill requires the companies who produced it to pay to collect, sort, and manage what's left, shifting the burden off New York's taxpayers while providing critical funding for municipal waste reduction and recycling infrastructure. The Packaging Reduction & Recycling Infrastructure Act also bans a dozen toxic chemicals from packaging, including PFAS and formaldehyde.

The Bigger Better Bottle Bill (S237/A6353) expands New York's existing container deposit law to include more containers such as tea, wine, liquor, hard cider, and nips bottles. It also raises the deposit to 10 cents, which will motivate more people to redeem their containers, and will give a much-deserved raise to more than 10,000 vulnerable workers in the state who earn their income by collecting and redeeming containers. Redemption centers will also get much needed support when the handling fee is increased to 6 cents. It is estimated that this bill will create 4,145 new jobs and increase the redemption rate in New York from 64% to 90%.

"After 40 years as the state's most effective litter prevention and enhanced recycling program, the Bottle Bill is not over the hill, it's over the landfill," **said Ryan Thoresen Carson, Environmental Campaign Coordinator with NYPIRG.** "The waste crisis is becoming dire. Microplastic pollution has been detected in human blood for the first time, with scientists finding the tiny particles in almost 80% of the people tested. In the face of New York's mounting solid waste crisis, the state must boost its recycling and waste reduction efforts, and at the same time save municipalities up to \$70 million a year. A modernized Bottle Bill achieves both of those important goals and has a 40 year track record of success."

The Packaging Reduction legislation is sponsored by the chairs of the Environmental Conservation Committee in both houses, Assemblymember Deborah Glick and Senator Peter Harckham; the Bottle Bill is sponsored by Assemblymember Glick and Senator Rachel May.

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