

## New York should not ban sustainability innovations

There is no question that we are in the midst of a waste crisis in New York. The figures are dire. For one thing, 90% of plastics are never recycled at all: they usually wind up in landfills instead. Increasingly, these landfills lack the space to accommodate them. It is no longer clear where all this unrecycled plastic can even go. Nonetheless, New Yorkers are paying handsomely for all this non-activity: \$150 million per year to have barely 10% of their waste recycled, according to the most recent figures.

Given all of that, it's not surprising that some might leap at the chance to encourage solutions — after all, anything that helps fix the problem would seem preferable to our current situation. And yet lawmakers in Albany, in an attempt to address this crisis, are currently pondering what would be, from my perspective, a terrible mistake—one that could deprive New Yorkers of meaningful economic benefits while further exacerbating our current situation.

I'm referring to a bill currently under committee in the New York State Senate: S. 4246, the Packing Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act. It is well-intentioned and has many intelligent, humane provisions. But—almost as an afterthought—it would unthinkingly prevent New Yorkers from reaping the benefits of an innovative technology being welcomed by 21 other states: advanced recycling.

Advanced recycling is a technology- and science-based waste solution that helps repurpose much of the 90% of used plastics that are otherwise difficult or impossible to recycle. One major type of advanced recycling technology uses pyrolysis to transform plastic waste into products that can be remade into the building blocks of new plastics and other products. [According to researchers at the City College of New York](#), it can reduce the need for fossil energy resources by up to 97% compared to landfilling, and can reduce CO2 equivalent emissions by more than 100% compared to typical end-of-life processes, such as landfilling and incineration.

My company, Braven, is headquartered in Yonkers, NY, just south of the district represented by Senator Pete Harckham, who introduced this legislation. For some time now, we have been bringing the benefits of advanced recycling to North Carolina, preventing thousands of tons of used plastics from filling up landfills. We could be doing the same in New York, helping—along with our competitors in the advanced recycling space—to eliminate much more of the 90% of New York's plastic waste that currently goes to landfills. But if this bill passes, we may never get the chance.

The environmental benefits here could be significant: if this bill were changed to support advanced recycling, much of the 800,000 new tons of used plastics that clog up landfills each year could instead be put to productive, sustainable use.

And the economic benefits could be almost as significant. Lawmakers—by abruptly and for no clear reason closing the door on advanced recycling—would be shooing away upwards of \$500 million in new economic activity and over 2,000 jobs, according to a recent [report](#)

Just last year, Senator John Mannion and Assemblymember Alicia Hyndman blazed the trail by introducing legislation (S.7891/A.9495) that would make New York another state to embrace technological innovation and economic opportunity to help solve the local plastic waste crisis by welcoming advanced recycling. They did this with massive support on both sides of the aisle and from the public they represent, with more than 8 in 10 voters saying they would support candidates who back advanced recycling, per recent polling.

Now—with no discernible change in opinion on the part of the public—this promising technology is at risk of being outright banned by the legislature. This despite the extensive scientific evidence in its favor, despite a plastics crisis that stands to get worse without solutions, and despite the economic boost predicted to bring to New Yorkers. New York should not have to lag behind while more than twenty other states (and counting) have welcomed the economic and sustainability benefits advanced recycling has to offer.

In virtually every other respect, we are aligned with Senator Harckham's mission. We continue working for a better environment—it is why we have devoted so many of our resources to making advanced recycling viable in the first place. For that reason, we're hopeful that Senator Harckham will recognize that the way to realize that shared vision is to bring companies like ours into the fold.

We urge our lawmakers to pass commonsense legislation that welcomes sustainable technological innovations, instead of banning solutions that would enable New York to better manage plastic waste.