



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER
BRAD LANDER

May 30, 2023

Dear Governor Hochul, Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, and Assembly Speaker Heastie,

I am writing to express my support to two important bills pending at the state level directed at reducing plastic waste and single-use packaging. This legislation would lower the financial burdens New York City taxpayers face for exporting waste while mitigating the hazards plastics pose to human health and the environment.

We stand with over 60 environmental organizations calling for the passage of the following legislation:

1. **The Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act (A5322/S4246)** would require companies to cut their single-use packaging in half and redesign what's left to make it recyclable, as well as to remove toxic chemicals such as PFAS, benzene, toluene, phthalates, bisphenols, and heavy metals from their packaging. When their packaging is discarded, the *companies* would be required to pay to collect, sort, and manage what remains, providing much-needed taxpayer relief and funding for our recycling programs and infrastructure. Right now, taxpayers are footing the bill.
2. **The Bigger Better Bottle Bill (A6353/S237)** would update New York's 40-year-old container deposit law by increasing the deposit from a nickel to a dime and expanding the list of containers to include wine, liquor, and most non-carbonated beverages. These changes could increase New York's bottle redemption rate from 64% to 90% - keeping billions more recyclable cans and bottles out of landfills and incinerators while reducing litter.

The New York City Comptroller is responsible for taking the long-term view on our city and few things are as long term as plastic waste and forever chemicals like PFAS. The cost to manage these waste materials is significant and will be a recurring issue for generations unless more of this waste is diverted from landfills or prevented altogether.

40% of plastic production is to make single-use items that clog our landfills, pollute our air, water, and soil when burned in incinerators, or end up littering our environment. New York's landfills have just 25 years of capacity left, at most. New York State already sends nearly 5 million tons of its waste to other communities while the City of New York spends \$429 million each year to export its waste to incinerators and landfills in other states or to the Finger Lakes region. New York has ten municipal waste incinerators, tied with Florida for the most incinerators in the country. These facilities produce hundreds of thousands of tons of air pollution and toxic ash each year. The producers of polluting packaging should be responsible for the recycling and disposal of their products, not taxpayers.

Furthermore, I urge you to exclude chemical 'recycling' either as amendments to these bills or in separate legislation. Chemical treatment of plastic waste cannot legitimately be considered recycling given that it is a highly polluting form of disposal. The solution to our plastic crisis is to lower production rather than to rely on chemical destruction after the fact.

Thank you for your consideration and for your partnership in making New York cleaner and healthier for our current and future residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brad Lander', with a stylized, cursive script.

Brad Lander
New York City Comptroller

Cc: Mayor Eric Adams