

My name is Joanne Moore, I'm a member of All Our Energy, we are a 501c3 nonprofit environmental advocacy organization, based in Pt Lookout, Nassau Co. I am a resident of Long Beach and I serve on the Long Beach Environmental Advisory Board.

As I am sure you already know, the goal of recycling is not only to reduce what is added to the waste stream, but to save energy and resources in the process of manufacturing. Plastics are specifically a problem because they do not decompose, they split into smaller and smaller particles which absorb toxins from the environment. Plastic in the landfill poisons the water; in the ocean those particles are mistaken for food by fish, sea mammals and birds. Our drinking water contains microparticles of plastic and plastic fibers, it is also found in mother's milk. Plastics are made from fossil fuels; they are toxic. We need plastic, but we can live without most single-use, disposable plastics.

The single best way to reduce plastic pollution is to stop using disposable single-use plastics! Enact statewide bans on any packaging or single use items that are not recyclable and by making some items "by request only". Create policy to mandate a minimum recycled content of these items thereby creating the missing market demand needed to financially incentivize recycling.

Incineration is not an option. No matter how "clean" the burning process is, the resultant ash is very toxic and must be disposed of. With climate change, rising ocean levels, superstorms and extreme weather events, no one can be sure that however well-stored the toxic ash is, that it will not end up in Long Island's aquifers, in the ocean and ultimately in our lungs. We are being poisoned slowly and silently. Also, the burning of plastic recyclables will not get us off fossil fuels.

I am very troubled that recycling in my city of Long Beach is being cut back because there is no market for recyclables. We will be changing from weekly residential single stream recycling pickups to dual stream, with, hopefully, 2 pickups per week. Plastics #3 through 7 and glass will no longer be included. Any contaminants will spoil entire batches of recyclables, sending all to incineration instead. The cost of sending garbage is many times more than that of recycling.

We want the State to:

Enact legislation to create a market for recyclables by requiring single-use plastics, cardboard, glass and cans to contain a certain percentage of recycled materials, so that it will be cost-effective, thereby incentivizing recycling.

Develop facilities statewide where municipalities can send their recyclables, creating jobs.

Help municipalities reduce plastic consumption by placing bans on the following items:

Styrofoam, which would include foam in building and construction materials similar to Nassau Co's bill, but that would also include Styrofoam that is frequently used by grocers to package produce

A plastic straw and stirrers ban, similar to Suffolk Co's law

Ban the Intentional release of balloons

Ban hotel shampoo/conditioner/skin cream samples

If #'s 3 through 7 plastics cannot be recycled, then ban them.

Be sure that the State's Bag ban which goes into effect March 1st will include all plastic bags, even the thicker plastic bags that supposedly can be used up to 125 times, but in reality are not really "reusable" more than 1 or 2 times. Compostable bags should also be included in this ban because these bags require very specific conditions in which to decompose, so they will end up polluting just as much as non-compostable bags do.

We want to require the state to do a consumer education campaign on the importance of recycling, and the need to reduce consumption. especially of single-use or disposable items.

In Long Beach we are concerned because the city contract with Covanta requires a certain tonnage of garbage to be burned to make electricity. What concerns us is that in order to meet the contract's terms, over 40% of recyclables are being sent with garbage to be burned. This is not a tenable solution. We cannot burn our way out of climate change!

We would like NYS to establish composting facilities where municipalities and landscapers can drop off compostable food scraps and yard trimmings, reducing waste.

We would also like NYS to support fiber recycling, which would keep unusable clothing and linens, etc out of the landfills, and repurposed.

I hope you will consider these suggestions and provide the support we need. NY needs to eliminate needless single-use waste and reach the goal of recycling more than ever to reduce our garbage, save money, energy and resources, and protect our environment and our health.

Thank you.

Joanne Moore