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New York State Joint Legislative Budget Hearing - Environmental Conservation January 28, 2026

Modernize the Bottle Bill and prioritize refill in the state budget Pass the Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act (S1464/A1749) as a standalone bill

I. Modernize the state's 40 year Bottle Bill to include a requirement for refillable containers, and pass it in the budget

Beyond Plastics urges the legislature to pass a strong Bottle Bill expansion in line with Senate bill 5684 (May) Assembly bill 6543 (Glick) that includes:

- A minimum ten cent deposit
- Deposits on all beverage containers except milk and 100% juice
- A handling fee of 6.5 cents, increased gradually
- Codification of the fraud task force and reporting requirements
- Language supporting refill and reuse

In addition, we support environmental standards for beverage containers that require refillable containers within a refill system to reduce plastic pollution, and a definition of recycling that clearly excludes “chemical recycling” technologies.

Including the Bottle Bill in the state budget has clear fiscal implications. Raising the deposit and expanding the types of covered containers would generate an estimated \$100 million in revenue, which could help fund the Department of Environmental Conservation and the Environmental Protection Fund. Further, modernizing the bill would save local governments money by diverting containers from the waste stream, thus reducing transport and disposal costs. The most recent data from DEC shows New York's redemption rate stands at 65%, or 5.5 billion of a total of 8.6 billion deposit containers. Other states including Michigan that have raised the deposit to ten cents see a redemption rate of 90%. It's important to note that state revenues would increase even with an increase in redemption due to the higher deposit value and more deposit containers in the system - a win win.

Increasing the handling fee from 3 cents to 6.5 cents per container is crucial to improve redemption access and support the infrastructure that makes the bottle bill possible. The handling fee is completely separate from the deposit and is paid by the deposit initiator to redemption centers and retailers that accept deposit containers back. More than 200

redemption centers have closed across the state in recent years due to the lack of handling fee increase. These small businesses support waste reduction, green local jobs, and importantly make redemption easy for the consumer. The handling fee investment is necessary to ensure that containers can be conveniently redeemed and consumers get their deposit back.

Senate bill 5684 (Senator May) and Assembly bill 6543 (Assemblymember Glick) would accomplish these important goals. Beyond Plastics recommends an amendment to include refill requirements that will address immense plastic pollution from plastic bottles. Not long ago, most beverages were sold in reusable glass bottles with a fifty cent deposit. This system has been replaced by single-use plastic bottles that are not effectively recycled into new bottles. One million single-use plastic bottles are produced every minute - adding up to more than half a trillion bottles per year. Globally, the world's largest beverage manufacturers are also the biggest plastic polluters.

Coca-Cola once pledged to transition 25% of its bottles to refillables by 2030, and PepsiCo pledged 20% refill by 2030. Both brands have quietly abandoned these pledges. The legislature should codify refillable container requirements in the Bottle Bill, as transitioning from single-use systems to refill and reuse systems is endorsed by the Climate Action Council:

“Reusable/Refillable containers: The State should enact legislation that incentivizes reusable and refillable solutions across the full spectrum of the packaged goods sectors, such as refill at home, return from home, refill on the go, and return on the go.” (p. 326)

Including refill in the expansion of the Bottle Bill is an incredible opportunity to greatly reduce climate emissions and pollutants. Between 21 and 34 billion one-liter PET bottles (706,000 to 1.1 million metric tons) enter the ocean each year, with beverage companies holding no liability for the pollution. Billions more are landfilled, incinerated, or downcycled. While recycling efforts are important, reducing the production of beverage bottles from raw materials by switching to refillable models should be a priority for deposit systems.

Refillable containers also have economic potential for the state. The reverse logistics of getting back, washing, and refilling containers would create new local jobs and opportunities. Please refer to my previous testimony at the joint hearing for the Bottle Bill, S237/A6353, on October 23, 2023, for more information. With regards to crafting an amendment to require refillable containers, Beyond Plastics is prepared to provide technical expertise.

II. Pass the Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act, Senate bill 1464 (Harckham) and Assembly bill 1749 (Glick) - but keep it out of the budget

Municipalities stand to save significant tax dollars through effective waste reduction and producer fees. The New York state Senate passed PRRIA in 2024 and 2025; and after passing through Assembly committees in 2025, it is now on the Assembly floor, with 74 cosponsors. We urge the legislature to pass this bill before the budget as a standalone bill.

According to DEC, 40% of waste going to landfills and incinerators is packaging and paper. Environmental justice communities are the most deeply impacted by emissions, leachate, reduced property values, health impacts, and overall diminished quality of life. Landfilling and incinerating waste is also expensive for taxpayers. According to the NYS Comptroller's Office, local governments outside of New York City spent \$918 million on trash collection and disposal in 2017. The New York City Council budgeted more than half a billion dollars on waste disposal alone for 2024, including landfill closure expenses and waste export to the Finger Lakes region of New York and other states. We are also spending \$788 million each year on recycling, according to an October 2025 report from the Center for Sustainable Materials Management and commissioned by New York state.

A Beyond Plastics analysis of nine selected communities across New York state (including New York City) estimated more than \$400 million in savings each year after adopting the Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act (PRRIA - [A1749 Glick](#)/ [S1464 Harckham](#)). This analysis includes annual waste reduction savings as well as an estimate of the revenue local governments will make when plastic polluters pay in New York City, Buffalo, Syracuse, Hempstead, North Hempstead, Smithtown, Oyster Bay, and Islip.

Annual Financial Benefit*			
Community	Avoided waste management costs	New revenue from reimbursements	Total financial benefit
New York City	\$114.2 million	\$266.4 million	\$380.5 million
Hempstead	\$3.8 million	\$8.9 million	\$12.7 million
Islip	\$1.1 million	\$2.7 million	\$3.8 million
Yonkers	\$1.0 million	\$2.4 million	\$3.5 million
Oyster Bay	\$800,000	\$1.9 million	\$2.7 million
N Hempstead	\$780,000	\$1.8 million	\$2.6 million
Syracuse	\$770,000	\$1.8 million	\$2.6 million
Smithtown	\$680,000	\$1.6 million	\$2.3 million
Buffalo	\$250,000	\$580,000	\$830,000
Total	\$123 million	\$288 million	\$411 million
<i>*See individual community fact sheets for sources. Figures are rounded for readability.</i>			

That \$400 million savings could cover more than half of statewide recycling spending. A previous report from Beyond Plastics, "Projected Economic Benefits of the New York Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act," shows how New Yorkers would save **\$1.3 billion in just one decade** after PRRIA becomes law, thanks to the money saved from reducing waste alone. Producer fees will increase this number even more.

See the fact sheets breaking down cost savings in each of these communities:

- New York City
- Hempstead
- Islip
- Yonkers
- Oyster Bay
- North Hempstead
- Syracuse
- Smithtown
- Buffalo

PRRIA requires a 30% reduction in single-use packaging, allowing local governments to avoid the cost of collecting 30% of packaging waste, and paying to send it to recycling centers, incinerators, and landfills. Businesses selling packaged products will pay a modest fee on packaging that will provide new revenue to local governments to reimburse them for their costs in managing packaging waste, to improve recycling programs and to launch new waste reduction programs such as reuse and refill. Reducing waste is cheaper than recycling, composting, landfilling, or incineration.

In addition to direct savings, reducing plastic packaging and pollution will have positive effects on social costs. A November 2025 report from Duke University estimates the hidden health, economic, and environmental costs of plastics to U.S. consumers to be upwards of \$1.1 trillion each year.

Plastic is being measured everywhere, and microplastics are entering our soil, food, water, and air. Scientists estimate people consume, on average, hundreds of thousands of microplastic particles per year, and these particles have been found in human placenta, breast milk, stool, blood, lungs, and more. Scientific research continues to find that the microplastics problem is worse than previously thought: New research in the New England Journal of Medicine shows that microplastics are linked to increased heart attacks, strokes and premature deaths. Another study from Columbia University found that bottled water can contain hundreds of thousands of plastic fragments.

Plastic production is warming the planet four times faster than air travel, and it's only going to get worse with plastic production expected to double in the next 20 years. Plastic products are made from fossil fuels and may contain as many as 16,000 chemicals, many of them known to be harmful to humans and even more untested for their safety.

The Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act (S1464 Harckham/A1749 Glick) will transform the way our goods are packaged. It will dramatically reduce waste and ease the burden on taxpayers by making companies, not consumers, cover the cost of managing packaging. The bill will:

- Reduce plastic packaging by 30% incrementally over 12 years;

- Require all packaging — including plastic, glass, cardboard, paper, and metal — to meet a recycling rate of 75% by 2052 (with incremental benchmarks until then);
- Prohibit the harmful process known as chemical recycling to count toward achieving these recycling rates;
- Prohibit 17 of packaging's worst toxic chemicals and materials, including all PFAS chemicals, polyvinyl chloride (PVC), lead, and mercury;
- Establish a modest fee on packaging paid by product producers, with new revenue going to local taxpayers; and
- Establish a new Office of Inspector General to ensure that companies fully comply with the new law.

Each year that we postpone legislative action to reduce plastics, the problem grows, as plastic production is on track to triple by 2060. Roughly 40% of new plastics are already used for single-use packaging. These plastics cannot be effectively recycled into new packaging or bottles. A small percentage is downcycled, often into textiles, which release microscopic plastic fibers into waterways. The rest of packaging waste is incinerated, landfilled, or winds up in the environment.

This is David versus Goliath. Last year, a whopping 106 registered businesses and organizations worked against PRRIA — megacorporations like ExxonMobil, Shell, McDonald's, Amazon, and Coca-Cola. Compare that to the 23 lobbyists working in favor of the bill — mostly nonprofit groups like NYPIRG, NRDC and Food & Water Watch. [Read more about the lobbying around PRRIA here.](#)

Megacorporations may be campaigning hard against the bill, but the people want to pass it. [A bipartisan 73% of New York voters are in favor of the bill.](#) Because the legislation would save tax dollars and protect our health, over 30 localities across the state have passed resolutions urging Albany leaders to pass it. The New York City Council [passed a resolution](#) in support, and the Mayor's Office released a [memorandum of support](#) in favor of the legislation. More than 300 organizations and businesses — including Beyond Plastics, Hip Hop Caucus, Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, League of Women Voters, Environmental Advocates, NYPIRG, Earthjustice, Blueland, and DeliverZero — issued a [memo of support](#) stating, "This bill would save tax dollars and position New York as a global leader in reducing plastic pollution."

The Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act would fulfill a critical component of the [Climate Action Council's Scoping Plan](#):

"Phase out single use packaging: The State should enact legislation that supports the reduction and eventual elimination of single-use packaged items for use in stores." (page 326)

Prioritization of reducing single-use material is also mentioned throughout the [2023 DEC Solid Waste Management Plan](#):



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“Other legislative recommendations that will assist in reduction and recycling efforts include: ... Incentives for reusable and refillable products; ...Single-use product restrictions; ...Restrictions on harmful chemical use in consumer products.” (Page 5)

“From single-use items such as utensils, food wrappers, and takeout containers to containers for household items such as soaps, shampoos, and cleaning products, an enormous array of single-use packaging and single-use items exists across all areas of life... The first step in rethinking the management of discarded materials is to prevent materials from being discarded in the first place. Addressing the “take, make, toss” model includes replacing single-use systems with reuse systems.” (page 7)

“Support proposals, to restrict, and reduce the use, sale, and distribution of certain single-use products in New York State to prevent problematic waste and motivate consumers, businesses, and institutions to purchase and use reusable products” (page 36)

About Beyond Plastics

Launched in 2019, Beyond Plastics pairs the wisdom and experience of environmental policy experts with the energy and creativity of grassroots advocates to build a vibrant and effective movement to end plastic pollution. Using deep policy and advocacy expertise, Beyond Plastics is building a well-informed, effective movement seeking to achieve the institutional, economic, and societal changes needed to save our planet and ourselves, from the negative health, climate, and environmental impacts for the production, usage, and disposal of plastics.