

NM Plastic Pollution Reduction Act--- Frequently Asked Questions

Why can't plastics just be recycled?

- Half of all plastic is designed to be discarded after a single use. It breaks down to micro bits, and spreads everywhere: deep in the ocean, high in the mountains, and into human bloodstreams.
- Recovering and recycling plastic uses labor to capture and sort, water to clean, and energy to transport and process the pellets. Virgin plastic is cheaper.
- Market prices for recycled plastic are unstable.
- Plastic recycling programs have never achieved more than 10% and are now closer to 5%. The remaining 95% is landfilled, burned or escapes into the wild.
- New technologies to decompose plastic must be scaled up to cleanly and completely process millions of tons of new and existing waste.

What will replace prohibited disposables? Containers and packaging that are compostable, recyclable, returnable, and/or reusable. Consumer demand, economics, and stricter regulations are driving innovative packaging designs in the US and other countries.

How will the NM PPRA benefit New Mexicans? It will help us:

- Transition to a more circular economy, where resources are recovered and reused. It will create steady, productive jobs.
- Cut down on our intake of microplastics and exposure to greenhouse gases and toxic chemicals from plastic production and use.
- Aid our tourism, film, and recreation industries by keeping our landscapes enchanting.
- Decrease the economic burden on local jurisdictions to process plastic waste.
- Create opportunities for local entrepreneurs to design sustainable products and delivery systems.

Is anyone else prohibiting single use plastics? Ten US states plus Canada and Puerto Rico have passed similar measures. Over 100 US local governments plus European, African, and Asian countries have also enacted restrictions.

Why do we need this bill now? Plastic industry representatives are introducing bills in other states to preempt local plastic restrictions. It's almost certain one will be introduced in NM soon.

Will this bill include Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)? This bill is a first step which will eventually assist EPR legislation in the future.

When will this go into effect? A transition time of 6 to 18 months will provide businesses time to diminish existing stocks and acquire suitable replacements.

What about chemical recycling? Not technically recycling, these processes usually turn plastic into fuel for burning. No facility has been successful in scaling up to re-process more than a tiny % of plastic waste.