

March 27, 2023

Honorable Kathy Hochul  
Governor  
State Capitol  
Executive Chamber  
Albany, NY 12224

Honorable Carl Heastie  
Assembly Speaker  
LOB 932  
Albany, NY 12248

Honorable Andrea-Stewart  
Cousins  
Senate Majority Leader  
330 Capitol  
Albany, NY 12247

**RE: Include the Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act in the State Budget**

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

We, the undersigned, representing environmental organizations, businesses, local governments, product stewardship organizations, and other waste management stakeholders, write to respectfully **urge you to include a strong Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act in the final SFY 2023-24 budget.** It is imperative that the Act is adopted in the context of the state budget so that new staff can be allocated to the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to help implement and provide robust oversight of this important program.

Governor Hochul's executive budget includes eight full time employees at DEC to support implementation of the Waste Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act. The DEC has estimated that the Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act (S.4246/A.5322), with its important and aggressive goals, would require as many as sixteen DEC staff in order to implement the law. **Without new staff, implementation of the program would inevitably be delayed and lack adequate enforcement.**

Waste reduction and recycling infrastructure, also known as Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for packaging and printed paper, has been discussed and debated for almost a decade in New York State. This policy has been vetted at policy roundtables held by the Senate Environmental Conservation Committee, state budget hearings, three-way negotiations, and countless legislative meetings over the course of many years. The public has extensively weighed in on the need for this policy, with several thousand letters submitted to the Governor and legislature in recent years in support of EPR in the budget.

In 2021, New York made meaningful progress on a packaging EPR bill and we were poised to be the first state in the nation to pass this type of law, but the bill ultimately failed to pass. Since that time, the states of Oregon, Maine, Colorado, and California have all enacted packaging EPR laws (guided by decades of experience with packaging EPR laws in in Canada and Europe). New York can't afford to fall further behind. **We know how to craft a strong packaging EPR bill; now we need the political will to finally enact this much-needed policy in New York State.**

The longer we wait, the more our local governments, taxpayers, and environment will suffer from the state's ongoing solid waste crisis. A recent analysis by the New York State Product Stewardship Council and the Recycling Partnership estimates that the cost of providing recycling for just six municipalities (NYC, Buffalo, Syracuse, Troy, North Tonawanda, Cambria),

representing about 45% of all households in the state, is close to \$200 million per year. **By extrapolation, the total cost savings to local governments from implementing this policy could exceed \$420 million annually. We simply can't afford to wait any longer.**

We support the Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act (S.4246/A.5322), which was included in the Senate one-house budget proposal. The bill, which includes strong goals for waste reduction, a prohibition on toxics in packaging, a definition of recycling that excludes so-called chemical or advanced recycling, and strong oversight and enforcement, provides a strong foundation for budget negotiations between the Governor, Senate, and Assembly.

In closing, we strongly support the inclusion of Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act, along with new full-time employees at the DEC, in the final SFY 2023-24 budget. Thank you for your consideration, and please feel free to reach out to our organizations to discuss this further.

Sincerely,

Adrienne Esposito  
Executive Director  
Citizens Campaign for the Environment

Dawn Timm  
Chair  
New York Product Stewardship Council

Julie Tighe  
President  
New York League of Conservation Voters

Thomas Outerbridge  
Manager  
Sims Municipal Recycling

Stephen J. Acquario  
Executive Director  
NYS Association of Counties (NYSAC)

Bobbi Wilding, MS  
Executive Director  
Clean+Healthy

Peter A. Baynes  
Executive Director  
NY Conference of Mayors

Gary C. Carrel  
President  
New York State Association of Reduction,  
Reuse and Recycling

Caitlin Ferrante  
Conservation Program Manager  
Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter

Scott Cassel  
Chief Executive Officer/Founder  
Product Stewardship Institute, Inc

Cc: Honorable Pete Harckham, Chair, Senate Environmental Conservation Committee  
Honorable Deborah Glick, Chair, Assembly Environmental Conservation Committee  
John O'Leary, Deputy Secretary for Energy and Environment  
Ashley Dougherty, Assistant Secretary for Environment  
Caitlin Stephen, Senior Policy Advisor for Environment