



NMRC
NEW MEXICO RECYCLING COALITION

Waste Reduction, Recycling & Producer Responsibility

July 22, 2024

The New Mexico Recycling Coalition

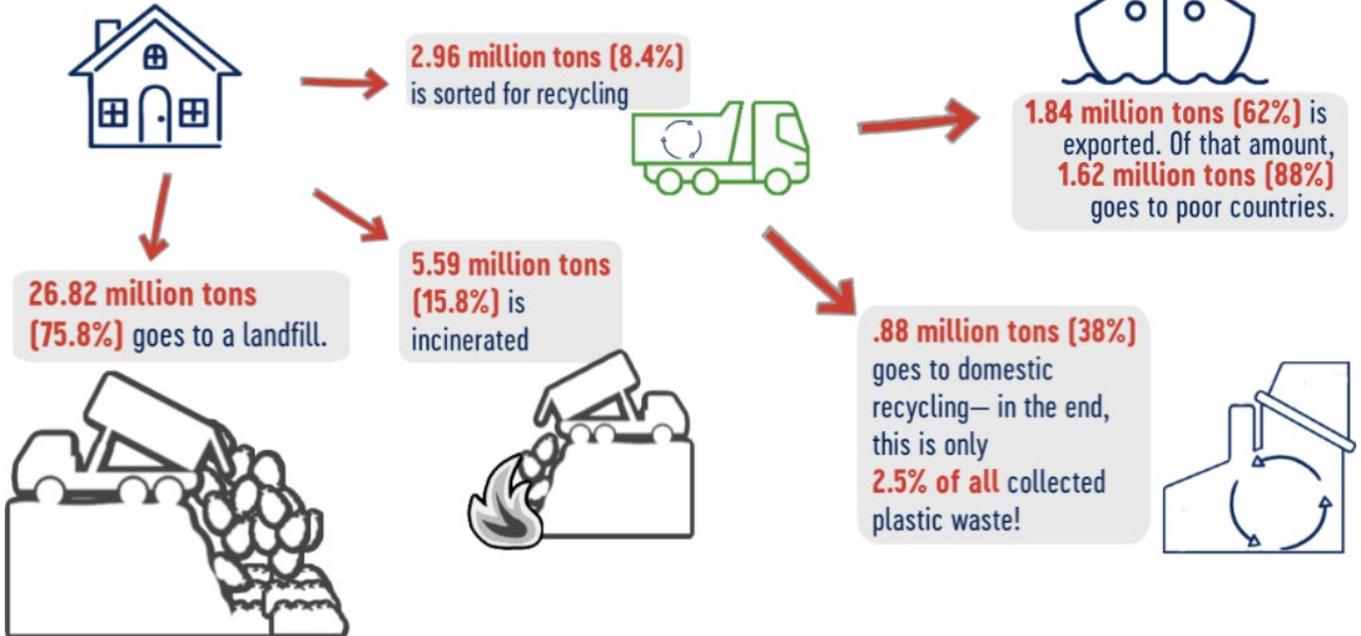
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The status quo isn't working

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE **35 MILLION TONS OF PLASTIC WASTE** WE DISPOSE OF EACH YEAR?



Recycling Professionals Stakeholder Meeting – June 6, 2024

70 attendees representing 45 NM Communities

Items in the waste stream that are the biggest nuisance for NM Recyclers/SW Professionals

- Mercury containing devices – Sales ban
- Lithium-Ion batteries – Landfill Ban
- Styrofoam food containers – Sales ban
- Mattresses – EPR program
- Tires - EPR program and/or landfill ban
- Plastic packaging – EPR Program + sales ban



A wide-angle photograph of a massive industrial construction site, likely a power plant or refinery. The scene is filled with a dense network of steel frameworks, scaffolding, and various types of cranes in red, yellow, and white. Large, rounded, metallic components are visible in the mid-ground. The background shows a hazy sky and distant hills. A semi-transparent blue box with white text is overlaid in the center of the image.

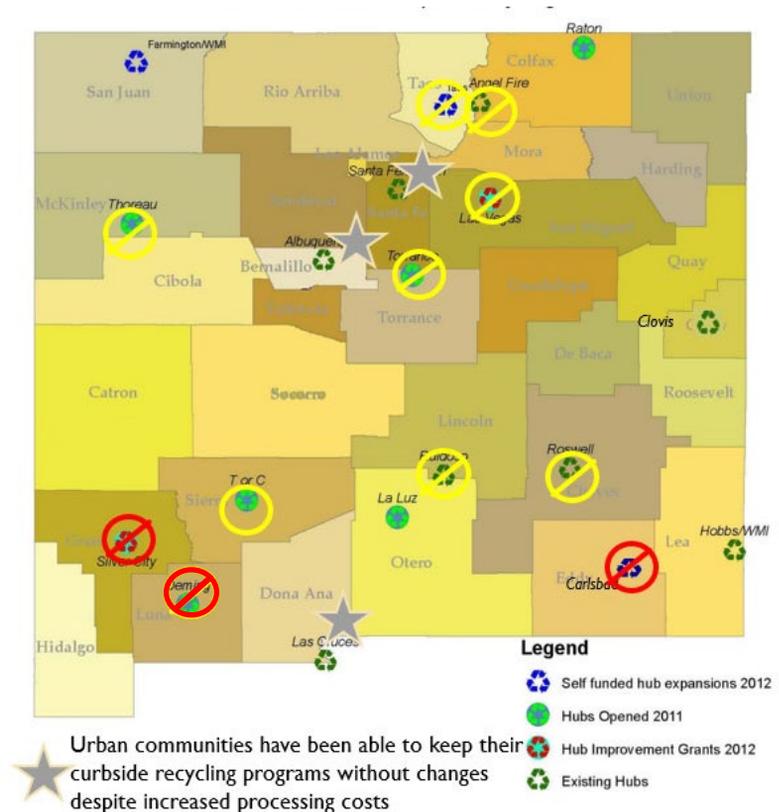
Half of all plastics ever manufactured
have been made in the last 15 years.

If the plastics industry were a country, it
would be the world's 5th largest
producer of greenhouse gases.

Recycling is an important part of the solution, but not the ONLY part or even the FIRST part – reduce/source reduction trumps recycling

Statewide Recycling in NM - 2024

- Silver City, Deming & Carlsbad have shut their recycling hub
- Most others have stopped accepting plastics and mixed paper
- Town of Taos closed its robust drop off recycling center, currently Taos County recycles cardboard with one vertical baler for the entire county
- In rural areas – Otero County and Raton still offer comprehensive drop off recycling to residents



Single Use Plastic & NM's Recycling Systems

- Most communities in the state do not provide plastic recycling
- Single plastic bags and Styrofoam containers are some of the top contaminants nationwide and in NM's recycling programs.
- These items get caught in equipment and pose hazards to employees
- In New Mexico plastic bag "tangles" cost the City of Albuquerque's recycling program an estimated \$4 million per year in expenses.



What are the other impacts of these hard to manage items?

LITTER

- Know Your Litter Globally – Break Free From Plastic Global brand audit 2023, 250 brand audits in 41 countries, 573,719 pieces of plastic packaging waste



Know Your Litter - USA

- Keep America Beautiful 2020 National Litter Study tracked 86 products along roadsides and waterways = 818 million fast-food packaging products, 2.6 billion food-packaging film item, 308 single use plastic bags

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Paper and Plastic Packaging EPR Laws

Colorado – Producer Responsibility Program for Recycling (2022)

- Mandates that companies that sell consumer-facing packaging and some printed paper join a producer responsibility organization (PRO), with exceptions for smaller business and highly regulated packaging, such as medicines. The PRO would then, through dues, fund and manage a statewide recycling system.
- Covered producers must sell \$5 million or more in the state per year or use 1 ton or more of packaging in the state
- Producer fees into the PRO are based on the amount and type of packaging and paper used (e.g. the more toxic the material or the harder it is to recycle, the more \$ producers pay)
- Fees will go toward funding new or improved statewide recycling services
- Bill includes unique provisions for processing compostable packaging
- Generates a statewide covered materials (minimum recyclable) list
- Requires producers to create a statewide education/outreach program on recycling and reuse of covered materials
- Needs assessment currently underway,, producers must participate in the PRO by July 1, 2025.

California – Package Pollution Prevention & Packaging Producer Responsibility Act (2022)

- Shifts the plastic pollution burden from consumers to producers by raising \$5 billion from industry members over 10 years.
This will:
 - Cut plastic pollution and
 - Support disadvantaged, low-income, and rural communities hurt most by the impacts of plastic waste.
- Producers of single-use plastic packaging and plastic single-use foodservice ware who do business in California must join a producer responsibility organization (PRO) by Jan. 1, 2024 to continue selling, importing, or distributing these materials in that state.

By 2032 California will.....

Cut By



25%

Single-use plastic:

- Packaging and
- Food ware

Recycle



65%

Of single-use plastic:

- Packaging and
- Food ware

Ensure



100%

Of single-use:

- Packaging
- Plastic food ware

Is recyclable or compostable

Single product EPR Example – New York

New York - Establishes a Carpet Collections Program law in 2021

- EPR law requires carpet producers to fund a convenient carpet collection program at no cost to NYS consumers.
- Includes carpets, modular carpet tiles, carpet pads & artificial turf
- A producer may not sell carpet in the state unless it participates in an approved carpet collection program plan.
- Producers are responsible for all costs associated with the implementation of their carpet collection programs.
- A producer or its representative organization must also provide an outreach and education program to inform consumers, carpet installers and others engaged in the management of discarded carpet
- Carpet producers must comply with applicable labeling and design requirements as well.
- Producers must submit annual reports to the state
- Includes the phase-out of PFAS in carpet
- Works to build supply chains for products made with recycled materials
- Requires new carpet be manufactured with increasing percentages of post-consumer recycled material, as well as sets specific goals for closed-loop recycling that will lead to the development of a more circular economy for the industry.



Carpet

Carpet can be toxic, but is highly recyclable.

Policy Tools to Drive a Circular Economy – SALES BANS

Sales Bans – Banning Nuisance Materials

- Over 500 municipalities in 28 states had plastic bag legislation in effect as of 2021. Additionally, 12 states have single-use plastic bag bans: California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, & Washington
- A [recent report](#) found that plastic bag bans WORK to reduce the number of single use plastic bags used. Data from three states and two cities with bans = reduction of 6 billion single-use plastic bags used each year.



What can NM Lawmakers do to help?



- Pass a single-use plastic prevention law that supports NM's recycling systems and reduces litter by banning the most egregious single-use plastic items (bags, Styrofoam food containers, etc).
- Support EPR for an inaugural product (Tires? Like Connecticut)
- Ban sales of toxic, easily replaced items, e.g. new mercury containing lightbulbs



Image from Santa Fe County