



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pete Harckham

Environmental, Civic and Faith-Based Groups, Legislators Call for Packaging Reduction

PETE HARCKHAM March 20, 2025

| ISSUE: **SENATOR HARCKHAM. SD40, PACKAGING REDUCTION, PLASTIC WASTE, RECYCLING**



State Sen. Pete Harckham with Asm. Deborah Glick, other legislators and environmental advocates

Solid waste is impacting our environment and health while costing taxpayers billions each year
Albany, NY – More than 15 different environmental, civic and faith-based groups, plus several state legislators joined New York State Senator Pete Harckham and Assemblymember Deborah Glick at the State Capitol today to call for support of the Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act (PRRIA).

The bill ([S.1464](#) / [A.1749](#)), which recently advanced in both the Senate and Assembly Environmental Conservation Committee, aims to significantly reduce packaging waste by requiring companies to reduce overall packaging use, improve recyclability, fund recycling infrastructure, support municipal recycling programs, and eliminate toxins in packaging materials. The legislation has broad approval from New Yorkers according to public polling.

Groups participating in today's press conference included the American Lung Association, Beyond Plastics, Capitol District Zero Waste, Environmental Advocates NY, League of Women Voters, New York League of Conservation Voters, New York State Association of Counties, NYPIRG, Protect the Adirondacks, Riverkeeper, Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter and Sisters of Mercy Justice Team – NY.

Additionally, 206 environmental, civic and faith-based groups and organizations have signed on to a letter of support for PRRIA, released today in conjunction with the press conference. A copy of the letter is attached to the release.

The other state legislators participating in the press conference were Sens. Brian Kavanaugh, Rachel May and Patricia Fahy, plus Asms. Harvey Epstein and Jessica González-Rojas.

To see a video of today's press conference, click [here](#).

Harckham and Glick, the prime sponsors of PRRIA, chair the Environmental Conservation Committee in their respective branches of the States Legislature.

“The already immense and continuously growing environmental and health challenges posed by waste and plastic pollution are costing us untold billions of dollars each year,” said Senator Harckham. “Whether it is municipalities and taxpayers burdened by the day-after-day collection and disposal of waste, or the nightmarish costs resulting from the scientifically proven health effects of this pollution, including cancers, asthma and endocrine

disruption, packaging reduction and revamped recycling are the only ways we can turn this financial crisis around.”

“The Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act moving in both houses is a tremendous relief for municipalities, taxpayers, and the environment,” said Assemblymember Glick. “Our climate is in crisis and limiting the unnecessary and sometimes toxic packaging that is filling our landfills, harming New Yorkers and the environment is essential now. Globally, producers are already responding to similar legislation and finding the solutions needed for sustainable and reusable packaging. We need those same innovations in New York and our municipalities need relief from the increasing financial burden of excess packaging. This legislation needs to pass this session; our climate and New Yorkers can’t wait.”

State Senator Rachel May said, “As consumers, we have a responsibility to reduce solid waste by reusing, recycling, and redeeming containers. It is high time that the producers of these goods share the responsibility for reducing solid waste. I proudly support Senator Harckham and Assemblymember Glick’s PRRIA, which will help reduce packaging waste in landfills. Addressing our solid waste crisis requires both PRRIA and measures like the expanded Bottle Bill to bring us closer to a more sustainable future for our state.”

Dr. Kathleen Nolan, President of the New York chapter of Physicians for Social Responsibility, said, “We know that exposure to certain types of plastics and plastic precursors put workers at risk, and recent studies correlate a higher risk of heart attack, stroke, and death in people with tiny fragments of plastic (microplastics and nanoplastics) in blood vessels. We must take action to reduce our exposures, prevent plastics from entering our hearts, brains, and every organ of our bodies, and move to a future in which babies are no longer born with microplastics in their guts.”

Stephen J. Acquario, Esq., Executive Director of the New York State Association of Counties, said, "The Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act will hold producers responsible for their packaging, triple recycling rates across the state, and provide an estimated \$300 million in relief to local governments that are managing our solid waste. Not only will this legislation modernize our infrastructure and reduce toxic chemicals in packaging, but it will also create new jobs that align with the state's climate goals. NYSAC stands with Senator Harckham in advocating for this practical framework that has proven successful in other states and countries."

Solid waste, and its steady increase in volume each year, has been impacting the environment and the health of New Yorkers all along, as well as causing a tremendous burden on taxpayers. New York State's 25 municipal solid waste landfills could be full within the next 15 years, according to the NYS Solid Waste Management Plan.

Moreover, the incineration of waste creates air quality issues and increases greenhouse gas emissions. It is the cash-strapped municipalities—not the multi-billion-dollar corporate giants that produce the packaging and plastic, that end up bearing the burden of collecting, sorting, and processing waste, driving up costs for taxpayers.

PRRIA will require producers of packaging and plastic waste with annual net revenues over \$5 million and those responsible for more than two tons of annual packaging waste to reduce their packaging by 10% within three years and 30% within 12 years. Also, PRRIA sets post-consumer recycled content standards for packaging: within two years, glass packaging must contain 35% recycled material, paper bags 40%, and plastic bags 20%.

Judith Enck, President of Beyond Plastics and former U.S. Environmental Protection Agency regional administrator, said, "None of us voted for more plastic, yet taxpayers are forced to spend hundreds of millions every year just to bury and burn waste at polluting landfills and

incinerators. This is only going to get worse as fossil fuel companies rapidly increase plastic production — and plastic pollution — with taxpayers stuck paying the bill. The legislature must pass the Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act this session, and put plastic polluters — not New Yorkers — on the hook for their own mess.”

Katherine Nadeau, Deputy Executive Director of Policy and Programs for Environmental Advocates New York, said, “This bill does something simple yet profound: it makes the companies that create packaging waste responsible for cleaning it up, instead of leaving the costs to New York’s taxpayers. Right now, each and every one of us pays to landfill and incinerate needless mountains of plastic—polluting our air, water, and even our own bodies in the process. The Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act cuts waste at the source and puts New York on the path to a cleaner, healthier future.”

Adrienne Esposito, Executive Director, Citizens Campaign for the Environment said, “Every crisis needs a solution. The Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act is a solution to our state’s solid waste management crises that is a win for both our environment and our communities. Now is the time to hold producers accountable for reducing packaging waste, eliminating toxics, and improving the recyclability of packaging materials. Corporations can make these changes, but they must be incentivized to do so. This critical legislation will not only reduce pollution but will significantly lower the financial burden of waste disposal on taxpayers and municipalities. It’s time to trash the status quo, it’s time to pass the Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act. CCE applauds Senator Harckham and Assemblymember Glick for their leadership and commitment to passing this nation leading legislation.”

Tim Guinee, Legislative Director for NY Climate Reality Chapters Coalition, said, “Solving New York’s solid waste crisis is inextricably linked to solving the climate crisis. The New York Climate Reality Chapters Coalition, representing thousands of politically engaged citizens

across the state, wholeheartedly and unanimously supports the passage of the Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act. The bill represents a moral opportunity for the state to step forward and vigorously protect New Yorker's health and the environment."

Blair Horner, Senior Policy Advisory for the New York Public Interest Research Group, said, "New York's mounting solid waste crisis must be addressed with innovative, impactful solutions. S.1464/A.1749 moves the needle in the state's efforts to reduce the amount of trash, reuse materials where appropriate, and encourage a reliance on recycling. NYPIRG applauds Senator Harckham's and Assemblymember Glick's leadership and urges quick action this session."

Jeremy Cherson, Associate Director of Government Affairs for Riverkeeper, said, "New York must step up and pass the Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act this legislative session to protect our greatest resource: clean water. Mega corporations and polluter industry groups, such as the American Chemistry Council, have come to Albany to do what they do best — muddy the waters around their responsibility to clean up their mess. We saw the same tactic when General Electric spent decades delaying the cleanup of its toxic PCBs in the Hudson, and now we see extremely profitable corporations employing the same strategies to avoid responsibility for the proliferation of single-use plastic. Ideally, these producers would reduce plastic pollution proactively, but in the absence of corporate leadership it is up to forward-thinking champions like Senator Harckham and Assemblymember Glick to compel companies to fulfill their responsibilities to public health and the environment."

Max Micallef, New York State Advocacy Manager for Clean Air Initiatives at the American Lung Association, said, "Plastic packaging has a negative impact on public health and the environment at every stage of its life cycle, from the extraction of fossil fuels used in its manufacture, through its disposal as waste, and even incineration and combustion. Inhaling

these contaminants can have permanent effects on our respiratory system, damaging our lung health. The American Lung Association in New York asks the New York State Legislature to pass the 'Packaging Reduction & Recycling Infrastructure Act' to protect the lung health of all New Yorkers."

Barbara VanEpps, Executive Director of the New York State Conference of Mayors, said, "By establishing an extended producer responsibility program, this legislation would shift the financial burden of managing packaging waste from local governments to producers. Cities and villages are grappling with rising recycling costs and the challenges of managing excessive packaging waste. This bill would provide essential financial relief, ensuring local governments can better manage their waste systems, while supporting long-term sustainability efforts of our cities and villages."

Alexandra Grose, Senior Policy Counsel at Consumer Reports, said, "Currently, consumers are subsidizing the collection, recycling, and disposal of an ever-growing stream of plastic packaging through municipal taxes. This bill would shift the financial burden from taxpayers to large companies that are producing this plastic packaging in the first place. These companies should be responsible for improving our overburdened recycling systems. The bill also encourages manufacturers to eliminate known toxic chemicals in packaging, resulting in fewer health hazards introduced into our food and environment. We will continue to support Senator Harckham and Assemblymember Glick as they work to pass this legislation which will improve the health of New Yorkers and hold plastic producers accountable."

Julie Tighe, President of the New York League of Conservation Voters, said, "To achieve our goal of zero waste, New York State must adopt policies to create a circular economy that prioritizes recycled and recyclable materials and incentivizes the use of less packaging in the first place, and that is exactly what the Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure

Act does. We applaud Senator Harckham and Assemblymember Glick for leading the charge and we urge lawmakers to work with the governor to get this policy signed into law this year.”

Kate Donovan, Senior Attorney & Northeast Director of Environmental Health at the Natural Resources Defense Council, said, “New York cannot wait any longer to implement solutions that reduce plastic waste and consumption. By doing so, we can protect vulnerable communities from so-called chemical recycling technologies, support municipal recycling programs, and hold producers of packaging responsible for the tons of waste generated each year. With a new federal administration dismantling environmental protections, reversing initiatives to curb plastic consumption and embracing industry playbooks, it's clearer than ever that New York must act now to address the plastic pollution crisis and pave the way for other states to pass equally impactful legislation.”

Catherine Darcy, RSM, Ph.D of the Sisters of Mercy Justice Team – NY said, “Early on in his landmark letter / encyclical, *Laudato Si’: On the Care for Our Common Home*, Pope Francis laments: ‘The earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth.’(LS 21) Pope Francis then calls upon, ‘every person living on this planet’(LS 3) to take ‘decisive action, here and now.’ (LS161). The Sisters of Mercy Justice Team believes that the Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act (PRRIA) is one such ‘decisive action’ that we can take in New York State. Let’s make PRRIA the law of New York ‘here and now.’”

Christopher Amato, Conservation Director and Counsel for Protect the Adirondacks, said, “We applaud Senator Harckham and Assemblymember Glick for their continuing support of the Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act. This bill meets the solid waste crisis facing New York State head-on by creating financial incentives for the reduction of wasteful and non-recyclable packaging and by attacking the proliferation of plastic packaging. We urge the Senate and Assembly to promptly pass this crucially important bill.”

2025-S1464

- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate
- - Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
-

Enacts the "packaging reduction and recycling infrastructure act"

January 10, 2025

Assembly Floor Calendar

Sponsored by **Pete Harckham**

Do you support this bill?
