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L.A. City Council Backs CA Ballot Initiative Curbing Plastic Waste

Acts On Resolution By Members Koretz, O'Farrell and Krekorian

LOS ANGELES (March 22, 2022) – Acting on a [resolution](#) by Councilmembers Paul Krekorian, Paul Koretz, and Mitch O'Farrell, the Los Angeles City Council voted unanimously today to support a statewide ballot initiative compelling California's recycling authority to take sweeping measures to reduce the use of single-use plastic packaging and foodware. The [California Plastic Waste Reduction Regulations Initiative](#) will appear on the general election ballot in November 2022.

Councilmember Paul Krekorian said, "For decades, global petrochemical companies have defrauded the public, increasing their profits while they are destroying the planet," Krekorian said. "The only way to make meaningful progress against plastic pollution is to hold the producers of plastic accountable."

"Despite everything we now fully understand about the global destruction created by plastic pollution — choking the air in environmental justice communities around plastics plants and choking the life out of sea turtles in our oceans — the increasingly reckless oil industry is moving forward with over \$400 billion in investments, building countless new petrochemical plants," said resolution author Councilmember Paul Koretz. "The California Recycling and Plastic Pollution Reduction Act will help substantially reduce the demand for plastics and begin to turn around society's dependence upon these toxic products."

"Californians care deeply about the environment and deserve a future free of plastic pollution," said Councilmember Mitch O'Farrell, the chair of the Energy, Climate Change, Environmental Justice, and River Committee. "We know that change is possible because we are doing it here in Los Angeles. We need the same sense of urgency, all across the state, the nation, and the world. Our collective future depends on it."

In February, the Council [unanimously approved](#) a [set of instructions](#) to begin closing the loopholes in the City's single-use plastic bag ban, and to end the use of expanded polystyrene (EPS or styrofoam) food containers in food packaging and packing materials. Council has already acted to reduce the use of disposable plastic foodware in restaurants, to phase out

plastic bags, drinking bottles, and straws, to ban sales of plastic water bottles from LAX, and will soon adopt a citywide zero waste action plan.

The process of producing single-use plastics from fossil fuels generates greenhouse gasses, contributing to climate change. Large quantities of plastic trash litter streets and highways, and clog storm drains, sewers and water treatment systems. Petrochemical industry claims notwithstanding, most discarded plastic cannot be profitably recycled and is sent to landfills or washed out to sea. Researchers estimate that nearly nine million tons of plastic waste enter the ocean each year, a figure that could double by 2025.

At present, California taxpayers spend more than \$420,000,000 to divert plastic litter from waterways, beaches and oceans. “We could save most of that money if we didn’t create all this plastic trash in the first place,” said Krekorian.

Most plastics do not disintegrate like organic matter. Many break into tiny particles — microplastics — that pollute waterways and permeate the ecosystem. These microplastics are consumed by fish and birds and eventually end up in the human food supply.

The [ballot measure](#) requires the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) to adopt and enforce provisions to reduce single-use plastic packaging, promote innovations for packaging and foodware, and require producers to pay for cleanup of plastic pollution and management of waste.

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