

HB1808: Chemical Recycling Talking Points

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: HB 1808, Classifying burning plastic as recycling

- Legislators in the Pennsylvania General Assembly are moving a proposal that would create a new statewide definition for “advanced” or “chemical” recycling in the state.
- This effort was launched by the American Chemistry Council, an industry group that represents oil and plastic magnates like ExxonMobil and Shell Oil. They’ve been pushing similar bills in state legislatures across the country
- This new definition would allow polluting alternatives, like turning plastics into crude oil and jet fuel, and even incineration, to be categorized as "recycling." These processes will increase overall pollution and carbon emissions, since they include an additional, energy-intensive step in the process to turn the plastics into fossil fuels before you even get to the stage of burning them
- On July 7, 2020 the PA House passed HB 1808 (155 members for, and 46 against)
- Further reading:
- <https://pennenvironment.org/news/pae/new-report-plastic-%E2%80%9Cchemical-recycling%E2%80%9D-means-more-pollution-pennsylvania>
- <https://nextpittsburgh.com/current-features/the-advanced-recycling-bill-just-passed-by-the-pa-house-would-harm-the-environment-says-new-report-heres-why/>

Talking points for your LTE

1. Start with a personal reason/anecdote about why YOU don’t want to see harmful plastic incineration masqueraded as recycling
2. Provide some context about the bill: The General Assembly recently passed HB 1808, which classifies burning plastic as recycling. If signed into law, it will mean more air pollution, more fossil fuel development, and more single-use plastics here in Pennsylvania.
3. Then focus on one or two reasons you oppose this bill:
 - a. **Climate change:** The petrochemical industry is the single largest energy consumer in the world. Calling burning plastics ‘recycling’ doesn’t make it anything other than what it is: just another way to burn fossil fuels. Over half of the plastic that is processed in these facilities comes out as climate pollution (CO₂). Chemical recycling will only increase climate pollution for decades, which will make it virtually impossible to avoid the worst impacts of climate change.
 - b. **Air and water pollution threatening our health:** Pennsylvania’s Attorney General Josh Shapiro recently came out with a [report](#) detailing the legacy of pollution created by fracking and fracking-related activities: chronic air and water pollution, climate pollution, and plastic pollution, all threatening our health. Every step of this process will produce toxins, from the waste processing sites themselves, in the end use of the products they produce, and at the facilities where the waste from the process is dumped, destroyed, or treated. The chemical recycling industry is looking to expand into the same neighborhoods suffering from fossil fuel industry pollution. The last thing we need during a pandemic is to open the door to more air pollution that puts our health at risk.
 - c. **Bailing out polluters:** Classifying this as recycling allows some of the world’s largest and richest companies, like Shell Oil and ExxonMobil, to become eligible for tax breaks and state funding for their polluting activities. These companies don’t need our money, especially at a time when so much in the state is underfunded (like DEP, the Hazardous Sites Cleanup Fund, our schools and education, our infrastructure). The LAST thing we should be doing is making it *even easier* for these rich, dirty companies to pollute our air and turn a hefty profit.

- d. **Single-use plastics:** have become the scourge of our environment, clogging our oceans and waterways, and killing wildlife. We need LESS single-use plastics, not MORE. This will only promote the further production of plastics by providing a newer and dirtier end use for them, masked as something beneficial.

4. End with a call to action

- a. Call on your State Senator to vote NO on HB 1808, and put the health and wellbeing of their constituents above more profits for polluters
 - i. [Find your State Senator here](#)
- b. Check how your legislators voted ([House Vote](#))
 - i. If they voted yes: I was disappointed that my State Representative **NAME** voted for HB 1808, prioritizing companies like Shell and Exxon over PA communities and clean air.
 - ii. If they voted no: I want to thank my State Representative **NAME** for voting against HB 1808

