

Justice, Peace and Life

April 2024

The Lord's is the Earth,
And all the fullness thereof.
Psalms 24, 1



...so let's treat
God's Creation
as a garden
we are called to tend,

Not as an apartment
we can trash
like bad tenants
who didn't leave
a security deposit.



"Throwing away plastic in the sea is criminal. This kills biodiversity, the Earth, everything." -Pope Francis, [TV interview](#)

POISONING GOD'S CREATION WITH PLASTIC

In commemoration of Earth Day this month, the Catholic Climate Covenant and the ecumenical group Creation Justice Ministries, among other organizations, are highlighting the environmental disasters caused by plastic.

Tons of plastic pollution end up in waterways, killing off wildlife, including birds, fish and whales who mistakenly consume it and are also strangled by it.

Plastic breaks down into small flecks, called microplastics, which are showing up in our food supply, and therefore in us. Recent studies have found microplastics in the placentas of newborn babies. The chemicals in these plastics have been linked to a variety of adverse health conditions including reproductive harm and developmental delays in children.

It's also important to remember that most plastic is derived from oil and natural gas, and that extracting and refining these fossil fuels have their own adverse effects on the environment. Plastics can take hundreds of years to degrade, so they are filling up landfills. They never disappear, but as they break into those smaller and smaller parts, they release methane, one of the most lethal greenhouse gasses, contributing significantly to climate change.

To learn more on this topic, watch "Healing Our Throwaway Culture: A Focus on Plastics" from the Catholic Climate Covenant at this [link](#) and "Plastics 101" from National Geographic at this [link](#).

Member countries of the U.N are currently negotiating a first-ever treaty on plastic pollution. Countries of the Global South and island nations are disproportionately harmed by plastic pollution. We're called to stand in solidarity with them. Join with the Catholic Climate Covenant in insisting that U.S. negotiators ensure a strong and enforceable treaty. Sign the online petition [here](#).

Other resources: [Plastic Jesus: Real Faith in a Synthetic World](#): Reflections on plastic consumption from a Gospel perspective compiled by Creation Justice Ministries

[Plastic is Forever](#): Photos of people suffering in plastic pollution from the U.N.
[Planet or Plastic?](#): Recent research from National Geographic



"Some studies estimate that the total mass of microplastic particles consumed by adults corresponds to **50 plastic bags per year or one credit card per week.**"

Take Action:

Don't buy personal hygiene products like toothpaste or cosmetics that contain toxic plastics such as polyethylene, polypropylene or polyethylene terephthalate

Replace single-use plastics with reusable shopping bags, cutlery, cups, straws, and water bottles.

Use bar soap instead of liquid soap.

Try [bar shampoo and conditioner](#) and [laundry detergent sheets](#)

Two Bills to Reduce Plastics in New York State



The New York Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act

Senate bill S. 4246-a / Assembly bill A. 5322-a

This bill would:

- Reduce plastic packaging by 50%, gradually over the next twelve years.
- Reduce pollution in low income communities and/or communities of color where packaging is produced, landfilled, and incinerated.
- Make packaging safer for all New Yorkers by prohibiting certain toxic chemicals, including: PFAS, vinyl chloride, lead, mercury, formaldehyde, bisphenols, toluene and others which are used in common food packaging, including baby food.
- Save taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars. Companies will be required to pay for the management and recycling of their packaging waste, rather than taxpayers.

New York City proposed spending \$477M on waste exports in 2025. Nearly 30% of NYC trash is dumped in landfills in the Finger Lakes including the Seneca Meadows landfill.

Join **Beyond Plastics**, the organization leading this effort.

The Bigger Better Bottle Bill

Senate bill S.237-B/ Assembly bill A.6353

This bill would modernize New York State's 40-year-old Bottle Deposit Law by increasing the deposit on containers from a nickel to a dime and expanding the types of containers requiring a deposit to include sports drinks, iced teas, juices, wine, and liquor.

The current law has greatly boosted recycling rates and reduced litter. Expansion would cut solid waste costs for municipal governments and decrease landfill use.

Updating the law would also give a much-deserved raise to the people who collect littered containers and redeem them, helping to keep our neighborhoods cleaner.

Advocate for the Bottle Bill & the Packaging Reduction Bill

The legislative session in Albany will end in early June so we have to push hard to get these two bills passed! Call your State Senator and Assembly Member to ask for their support.



Microplastics are everywhere

State Assembly Switchboard: **518-455-4100**

State Senate Switchboard: **518-455-2800**

The operators can look up your legislators and connect you to their offices.

Then call Assembly Codes Committee Chair Jeff Dinowitz and ask him to put the packaging reduction bill on the next agenda: **518-455-5965**

If staff ask if you are a constituent, say the bill has statewide implications and it needs to pass this year.

And sign the online petition [here](#).



Join the Catholic Action Network

Sign up for e-mail alerts from the Catholic Action Network [here](#) or text the letters CAN to **50457** to receive text alerts. Be a voice for justice, peace and life!

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