

March 19, 2023

Dear Illinois General Assembly Members:

The undersigned 52 environmental, health, science, consumer protection and environmental justice organizations urge you to oppose any legislation that promotes so-called “chemical recycling,” including House Bill 1616.

So-called “chemical recycling” is mostly not recycling at all. Plastics are toxic through their entire lifecycle and the primary technologies that the plastic industry misleadingly calls “chemical recycling” or “advanced recycling” tend to be nothing more than incineration in disguise. These technologies won’t solve the plastic crisis but instead create new public health and environmental justice problems.

The technologies are toxic and produce hazardous waste. A recent [review](#) of eight currently operating facilities in the US found that most of these so-called “chemical recycling” facilities were not actually recycling any plastic. Rather, they are almost always creating materials that are later burned—a practice that is neither recycling nor environmentally sound.

Low-income and communities of color are the most impacted. The facilities using these toxic technologies are often sited in communities that are disproportionately low-income, people of color, or both, exposing these populations to harmful toxic emissions. Much of the hazardous waste generated is later shipped to be burned, in facilities that also tend to be in communities with the same demographics.

The chemical and plastic industry is advancing state legislation across the U.S. to increase the development and use of these polluting technologies through definition changes, tax credits, exemptions, regulatory re-classifications and other approaches. **HB1616 is part of this larger industry effort to advance false solutions to the plastic crisis rather than real solutions.** This bill would extend the deadline for gasification and/or pyrolysis “pilot” facilities to be built without undergoing the IL EPA environmental permit process.

We urge you to oppose HB1616, and all industry efforts to avoid regulation and fund toxic technologies.

Sincerely

Sherry Skalko
Founder
Reduce Waste Chicago
Member / IL Coalition for Plastic Reduction

Jon Schmidt & Barbara Cooper
Co-Founders, Organizing for Plastic Alternatives

Member / IL Coalition for Plastic Reduction

Andrea Densham
Senior Strategic Advisor
Alliance for the Great Lakes

Dr. Anja Brandon
Associate Director of U.S. Plastics Policy
Ocean Conservancy

Jennifer Lucas
Founder
Go Green Barrington
Member / IL Coalition for Plastic Reduction

Jacquelyn Casazza
Founder
Go Green Glen Ellyn
Member / IL Coalition for Plastic Reduction

Climate Reality Project
Chicago Metro Chapter
Member/ IL Coalition for Plastic Reduction

Deborah Halpern
Board Member
Co-chair Environmental Action Committee
League of Women Voters of Chicago
Member / IL Coalition for Plastic Reduction

Nicole Doucet
CEO and Co-Founder
Open Water
Member / IL Coalition for Plastic Reduction

Rita Soni Patel
Leadership Member
Palatine Cool Cities
Member / IL Coalition for Plastic Reduction

Renee Patten
Co-Chair
Edgewater Environmental Coalition
Member / IL Coalition for Plastic Reduction

Simrata Keshav

Founder
Go Green Vernon Hills & Lincolnshire
Member/ IL Coalition for Plastic Reduction

Cheryl A. Watson M.S., M.Ed.
Founder/ Principal Climate Resilience Strategist
EQUITABLE RESILIENCE & SUSTAINABILITY LLC
Member / IL Coalition for Plastic Reduction

Rachel Tompkins
Bring your own glen-ed
Member / IL Coalition for Plastic Reduction

Julie Moller
Ferd Foundation
Member / IL Coalition for Plastic Reduction

Jordan Parker
Executive Director
Triveni Institute
Member / IL Coalition for Plastic Reduction

Alison Waliszewski
Policy Director
5 Gyres Institute

Judith Enck
President
Beyond Plastics

Jane Williams
Executive Director
California Communities Against Toxics

Sarah Woodbury
Director of Advocacy
Defend Our Health

Mary Gutierrez
Director
Earth Action

Jessica Roff
Plastics & Petrochemicals Program Manager
Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives

Linda Rodriguez

Oceans Plastics Campaigner
Greenpeace

Melissa Jung
Director of Programs and Outreach
Inland Ocean Coalition

Kirstie Pecci
Executive Director
Just Zero

Veena Singla
Senior Scientist
Natural Resources Defense Council

Dianna Cohen
Co-Founder & CEO
Plastic Pollution Coalition

Sarah Doll
National Director
Safer States

Miho Ligare
Plastic Pollution Policy Manager
Surfrider Foundation

Jackie Nuñez
Founder
The Last Plastic Straw

Liz Kunkle
Founder & President
Go Green Winnetka

Michelle L. Thoma-Culver
President
Chicago Recycling Coalition

Beth Drucker & Kim Stone
Founders and Co-Facilitators
Go Green Illinois

Jenny Futterman
Chair

Go Green Highland Park

Art Spooner
Co-leader
Interfaith Green Network
Oak Park / River Forest

Chuck Wasserburg
Co-leader
Citizens' Greener Evanston

Mary Grose
Organizer
Bring Your Own Glen-Ed
Edwardsville

Phyllis Rubin and Jen Packheiser
Co-leaders
Go Plastic Free
Oak Park/River Forest

Elizabeth Bowman
Founder & President
Go Green Des Plaines
Des Plaines

Katherine Tellock
Co-Founder and Director
Chicago Environmentalists

Shira Hammann
Go Green Skokie Steering Committee

Natalie Lynn Lichtenbert
Founder and Director
Green Dolphin Project Global

Dr. Julieta Aguilera
Science Art and Trash project

David Cook
Owner
Prairie Ave. Consultants

Allyson Haut
President
League of Women Voters of Illinois
Member / IL Coalition for Plastic Reduction

Shital Pandit
President
Go Green Northbrook
Member / IL Coalition for Plastic Reduction

Kristen Youngman
Ecoartist / Member / Climate Reality Project + IL Coalition for Plastic Reduction
Wilmette, IL