

The background of the cover is a photograph of a beach. In the foreground, several large, clear plastic water bottles are lying on the dark sand. One bottle is in sharp focus in the lower left, while others are blurred in the background. The ocean and a cloudy sky are visible in the distance.

CONSERVATION **MATTERS**

THE JOURNAL OF CONSERVATION LAW FOUNDATION | www.clf.org

GETTING A GRIP ON PLASTIC

No 3
FALL
2019



THE BLAME GAME



PLASTIC POLLUTION IS AN ACCELERATING CRISIS, BUT WHO BEARS THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR CLEANING IT UP?

(HINT: IT'S NOT YOU AND ME)

PART ONE: BREAKING FREE FROM PLASTIC

PERSONAL ACTION ALONE WON'T SOLVE THE PLASTIC CRISIS, BUT IT CAN LEAD TO A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROBLEM

BY SHEBATI SENGUPTA

On the surface, Danielle Ricks is living life just like everybody else. She goes grocery shopping, cleans her house, and grabs a coffee on her way to work. She takes care of her cat, hikes when she can, and goes out to eat with her friends. If you look closer, though, you'll find Ricks making a series of intentional choices aimed at reducing her impact on the environment.

Those choices add up to living plastic free, a journey that began when Ricks learned about plastic pollution in the ocean. Like many of us, Ricks wanted to know what she could do to help address this growing problem beyond using a stainless-steel

water bottle and metal straws. She started wondering what her life would be like without any plastic at all. That's when she came up with a life-changing challenge – going plastic free for 40 days.

At first, Ricks tried to give up all plastic products, but she quickly realized that would be impossible. They were in her food packaging, her cleaning supplies, her hiking gear. Even her ceramic coffee mug had a plastic lid. In the United States, plastic has become so ingrained in everyday life that you have to step back to notice it's there. "Becoming aware of the topic," Ricks advises, "is half the battle."

So she reframed her strategy, coming up with two rules for herself. First, she wouldn't throw out any plastic she already had or couldn't avoid. "I find different uses for the plastic that I don't have a lot of control over," she says, including donating or repurposing those products. After Ricks replaced her cleaning supplies with

plastic-free alternatives, she gave the old ones to a local shelter. She turned her used almond milk cartons into planters and lined her cat's litter box with plastic bags.

Her second rule: Avoid single-use plastic. Despite how pervasive plastic is, as soon as Ricks began looking for alternatives, she kept finding more. When she goes out to eat, she brings her own takeout boxes so that she can avoid polystyrene. When she buys vegetables, she puts them in her own net bags instead of in the grocery store's plastic produce bags.

Once you think critically about what comes into your life, Ricks says, you won't go back. "It started out as a 40-day trial," reflects Ricks. "It is now a part of who I am and a part of my lifestyle." Today when a piece of plastic enters her life, she thinks about how she can reuse it. And she makes the active choice to opt out of plastic whenever she can. "I cannot *not* think about the environment as



Ricks's plastic-free challenge changed her life. She even switched to running shoes [LEFT] made with Parley Ocean Plastic™ – recycled waste from beaches and coasts intercepted before it reaches the ocean.

I walk through this world and go through my daily life,” Ricks says. “I am forever changed.”

Ricks recognizes the time and effort that went into her new plastic-light lifestyle. The reason such a change can seem so daunting for most of us is because sometimes plastic is the only choice you have. Big businesses mass produce, package, and sell tons of plastic every year – all in the name of consumer choice. But the reality is, plastic is profitable, and consumers often don’t realize that they could have another option.

And, while some companies are trying to minimize plastic use, Ricks advises, “it’s not going to really take off until customers demand it and we push back because we want to save the environment.” Until manufacturers are required to take responsibility for the pollution their products produce, no one can avoid all plastics.

Ricks, however, still believes everyone could benefit from a plastic-free challenge. “It is an eye-opening experience. If you try it, you’re never going to go back.” ♦

PART TWO: HOLDING POLLUTERS ACCOUNTABLE

CITIES, TOWNS, AND TAXPAYERS SHOULDN'T BEAR THE BURDEN OF THE PLASTIC PROBLEM

BY OLIVIA SYNORACKI

Plastic has been woven into our everyday lives since the 1950s, when it was introduced during the post-World War II reconstruction boom as a cheap alternative to steel, paper, glass, and wood. Its adaptability and accessibility led to its mass production, normalizing the overconsumption of expendable items and spawning today’s throw-away culture.

An estimated 8.3 billion metric tons of plastic have been produced over the last 70 years – 79 percent of which has ended up in a landfill or, even worse, been scattered as litter along roadsides, on beaches, and in the ocean, where it persists for centuries.

In recent years, these disposable habits have come under scrutiny as concerns about plastic pollution have spiked. Plastic manufacturers and distributors argue that consumers bear the blame for the

accelerating plastic crisis. By pointing fingers at consumer recycling habits, or lack thereof, plastic producers have successfully distracted the public from the real issues with plastic – and the real solutions.

The reality is, says John Hite, CLF’s Zero Waste Policy Analyst, “our country’s recycling system is broken. Much of the waste placed in recycling bins isn’t actually recyclable. Sadly, it’s taken a crisis for people to realize this.”

That crisis was triggered when China enacted its “National Sword” policy in February 2018. Up until then, domestic waste management companies had been shipping much of what was picked up from consumer recycling bins to China. While Americans were feeling good about all the plastic they were recycling, China was just burying or burning much of it on the other side of the world.

Then, the so-called China Sword came down. The country banned waste imports and set strict standards for the plastic it would accept. Suddenly, all of that “recyclable” plastic from America had nowhere

to go. What’s more, because China was paying to take all those recyclables, it had provided U.S. cities and towns a revenue stream, which more than covered the cost of recycling programs. “Without Chinese companies importing our trash,” says Hite, “the costs for dealing with it are falling back on communities in the U.S.”

In the nearly two years since China changed its policy, states, cities, and towns across the U.S. have tried to stem the plastic tide by passing a flurry of laws and regulations banning single-use plastics. But those laws will only take us so far. “Cities and towns – and, by extension, taxpayers – should not have to bear the cost burden of dealing with plastic pollution on their own,” says Hite. “Plastic producers must take responsibility for the hazards generated by their products, from their manufacture to disposal.”

The idea of producer responsibility is not new. In the electronic, automobile, and mattress industries, producers are held accountable for the recycling, reuse, or disposal of their products. Many items containing mercury, like automobile switches and thermostats, have also been

regulated by producer responsibility laws due to their toxic nature.

Now, with concerns about plastic pollution on the rise, plastic manufacturers are being put under the microscope. If other industries can be made accountable for their waste production under producer responsibility laws – especially when health and environmental risks are involved – why haven't plastic manufacturers been held to the same standards?

The answer, as usual, comes down to money. The waste management companies that run New England's landfills and trash pick-up make their profits based on the amount of waste they process. According to CLF's Zero Waste Project Director Kirstie Pecci, "plastic makes up about 11 percent of disposed waste. If plastic were not disposed of – if a system of actual reduction and recycling were instituted – waste companies would lose hundreds of millions of dollars in New England alone. Because of this, waste companies will fight tooth and nail to stop producer responsibility laws for plastic."

Plastic manufacturers – ExxonMobil, Dow Chemical Company, and their trade group, the American Chemistry Council – have also lined up against such legislation. Producer responsibility laws would run counter to their plans to spend billions of dollars building new facilities to significantly ramp up plastic production. Their solution to plastic waste? Burn it. The toxic ash, dioxin, and other harmful emissions created when plastics are incinerated are not an impediment so long as the chemical giants continue reaping profits.

Although producer responsibility laws for plastic have not been enacted in the U.S., other countries have taken action. In Europe, companies are required to pay taxes on their plastic packaging, as well as fees for the collection and recycling of those products. The European Organization for Packaging and the

RECYCLING REALITY

Forget what you've been told about recycling. Here's what the number on the bottom of packaging really means – and whether an item should be tossed into your recycling bin or not.

RECYCLE THIS...



PET: POLYETHYLENE TEREPHTHALATE

The most common household plastic, PET is good for holding liquids, so it's used to make soda, water, and juice bottles.



HDPE: HIGH-DENSITY POLYETHYLENE

Considered the safest plastic, HDPE is strong, opaque, and difficult to bend. It's used to make milk jugs and detergent bottles.



PP: POLYPROPYLENE

PP is the second-most produced plastic in the U.S. It's heat resistant but flexible, used to make everything from cars to yogurt containers.



THE BEST OPTION? NO PLASTIC.

Look for items that you can use again and again – and that aren't made from plastics.



NOT THAT...

PVC: POLYVINYL CHLORIDE

PVC is mixed with different synthetic additives, making it impossible to sort and recycle. It's used in cling wrap, blood bags, and piping.



LDPE: LOW-DENSITY POLYETHYLENE

The cousin of #2, HDPE, this is the most widely used plastic for common flexible items like plastic grocery bags and frozen food wrappers.



PS: POLYSTYRENE

Polystyrene, commonly known as Styrofoam®, is one of the most toxic plastics and the least recycled. It's used to make plastic cutlery, packing peanuts, and to-go containers.



EVERYTHING ELSE

#7 is a catch-all for any plastic not included in the others. It's used to designate baby bottles, five-gallon water jugs, and biodegradable plastics.



Environment estimates that the industry pays €3.1 billion in producer responsibility fees each year.

Passing similar laws in the U.S. will make manufacturers part of the solution to the world's accelerating plastic crisis. "A system like this would call on manufacturers to invest in design changes that would make products more recyclable, as well as reuse systems that would help cut down on waste," says Hite. "This will ultimately save cities, towns, taxpayers, and local businesses money."

Currently, only one New England state – Maine – is considering legislation related to producer responsibility. If passed, the bill will be the first of its kind for New England and the entire country.

Pecci, Hite, and the rest of CLF's Zero Waste team are determined to put New England at the forefront of the effort to hold plastic manufacturers accountable in the U.S. Building on the momentum of several nation-leading single-use plastic bans passed in the region over the past year (SEE SIDEBAR BELOW), they are focused on educating lawmakers about the hazardous effects of plastic – from the fracked gas used to produce it to its disposal costs – and the cost burden it poses to local government. It's through this education, along with testifying at hearings, writing and proposing bills, and collaborating with partner organizations, that the team is laying the path toward a zero-waste future. But its advocacy work doesn't end there.

The Zero Waste team also meets regularly with community members to educate them about plastic waste and encourage them to advocate for meaningful change by contacting their legislators.

The Zero Waste Team's efforts serve as a reminder that consumers can help to solve the plastic crisis, but they are not to blame for it. Ultimately, says Pecci, as the plastics industry continues to perpetuate a broken system, all of New England needs to look toward solutions that hold producers accountable. "The mass production of a material that endangers communities and contaminates the climate is simply unsustainable and unacceptable," she says. "Producers must play their part in solving this crisis." ♦

THE STATE OF SINGLE-USE PLASTIC

Where does your state stand on single-use plastic?

VERMONT MAKES HISTORY

Vermont leads the nation as the only state to pass a law to ban single-use plastic bags, polystyrene, and plastic straws (as well as drink stirrers), all in one fell swoop. Straws will be available on request and paper bags on hand for 10 cents a bag. CLF advocates pushed hard for the bill, setting a high bar for the rest of the region to follow.

MAINE MAKES UP FOR LOST TIME

Under its new governor, Janet Mills, the Maine legislature took swift action this year on key environmental issues, including a single-use plastic ban. When the ban goes into effect in April of 2020, paper bags will be available for 5 cents per bag. Maine is only the fourth state in the nation to ban single-use plastic bags statewide.

CONNECTICUT PHASES OUT BAGS

As of August, Connecticut began charging a 10-cent fee on plastic grocery bags. The state also began a two-year countdown to a ban on single-use bags for retailers and grocery stores, effective July 1, 2021.

NEW HAMPSHIRE FALLS FLAT

New Hampshire failed to pass either of two bills proposed this year to restrict single-use plastic. One bill addressed plastic straws and the other single-use bags. While state-level action has fallen flat, cities and towns are taking matters into their own hands. Portsmouth is leading the way with a citywide ban on polystyrene cups and containers and restrictions on single-use plastics on city-owned land.

RHODE ISLAND COMMUNITIES STEP UP

The Ocean State also balked on bills to cut plastic pollution during the last legislative session. However, the state's cities and towns are stepping up to fill the leadership gap. Fourteen cities and towns have enacted ordinances banning the use of plastic bags (Providence joined the ranks in October), meaning more than half of Rhode Islanders now live in a community with a ban in place.

MASSACHUSETTS MISSTEPS

The Commonwealth started the year off strong with a proposal to ban plastic and

paper bags that are not recyclable. However, by the summer, a redraft of the bill had weakened its strongest provisions, making it impossible for CLF to support. With nearly six months left in the session, CLF and its allies are not giving up on passing strong legislation this session.

GET INVOLVED

You play a critical role in pushing state legislators to ban single-use plastics and to take other urgent action to fix our plastic pollution problem. Stay up to date on the state of plastic near you – sign up for email updates from CLF. We'll let you know when you can make your voice heard.

www.clf.org/signup

WHY I GIVE



Bonnie Christie and Brownie explore the trails in her hometown of Hopkinton, New Hampshire. Photo: Kathy Barnes

Bonnie Christie

Hopkinton, NH | Champions Club Member since 2018

Bonnie Christie has seen CLF's work from multiple angles over her years living and working in New England.

Her first experience with the organization came when she worked for the Appalachian Mountain Club in Boston. "I got to know and collaborate with many dedicated environmentalists during that time, including attorneys at CLF," she recalls. When she and her family later moved to Vermont, they saw firsthand how pollution was harming iconic Lake Champlain. "This amazing lake was, and still is, suffering from many forms of pollution, which weren't tackled sufficiently until CLF brought a lawsuit against EPA to clean it up."

Christie now lives in New Hampshire, where another issue has drawn her to CLF: eliminating plastic pollution and cutting waste. "Over the past year,

I have had the benefit of connecting with [Zero Waste Project Director] Kirstie Pecci on plastics reduction legislative initiatives and getting started on moving our school district toward waste reduction and recycling," she says. "Her wealth of knowledge helps us avoid reinventing the wheel and enables us to compare our experience here in New Hampshire with our neighboring New England states."

Having seen CLF in action across New England, Christie knows how effective the organization can be – and how passionately its staff will fight for change. "CLF goes straight to the heart of the issues that matter to me and my community," she says of her decision to become a monthly Champions Club donor. "They do their work fearlessly and effectively, and make me feel like my investment counts."

Our donors inspire us to never give up because so much is at stake. Hear more from Bonnie and other CLF supporters at www.clf.org/whywegive. We hope their words will inspire you to support our efforts.

JOIN THE CHAMPIONS CLUB

clf.org/champions

Be part of a community of committed members whose ongoing, monthly support provides dependable funding for our work.

OTHER WAYS TO GIVE

Want to give a one-time donation? Or find out if your company will match your gift? Want to give an honorary or gift membership? Or learn more about planned giving?

You can do it all online in a few clicks. It's that easy.

So come visit us online and make your donation today.

www.clf.org/donate

Contact us today to learn more about giving to CLF.

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THE PROBLEM

At a time when New England (and the world) needs to ratchet down greenhouse gas emissions to avoid the worst impacts of climate change, the region cannot afford to invest in new fossil fuel power plants. Yet Invenergy, an energy developer based in Illinois, has been pushing to build a massive fracked gas and diesel oil power plant in Burrillville, Rhode Island, since 2015.

This is proof that communities can stand up to big gas and win.

— JERRY ELMER,
SENIOR ATTORNEY

Building this plant would mean paving over a pristine forest and belching carbon pollution into the air for decades. Despite strong opposition from Burrillville residents and many others in the region, Invenergy has spent years trying to convince state regulators to let it build this dirty power plant.

CLF IN ACTION

As soon as Invenergy filed its application to build the plant with the state, CLF took action. The organization intervened in the case and was joined by the Town of Burrillville, residents, and other local organizations opposed to the proposal.

CLF and its allies spent the next four years showing the Rhode Island Energy Facility Siting Board – the state entity that decides whether or not a power plant can be built – that this plant is both harmful and unnecessary. CLF demonstrated how uniquely valuable the proposed build site is to wildlife and how constructing a power plant there would damage the entire surrounding ecosystem. CLF also showed that a fossil fuel plant would make it impossible for the state to reach its climate goals. And the organization explained how New England doesn't need this dirty power at all, as the region has enough energy to cover its needs already.

Ultimately, Invenergy spent about \$45 million dollars in its attempt to convince the Siting Board to grant it a permit to start construction. CLF and the community stood against it at every turn.



shutting down big gas

by Bethany Kwoka

PROGRESS

In June, the Siting Board denied Invenergy the permit needed to build its plant. The state entity agreed with what CLF had been saying all along: the region does not need the energy the plant would produce.

In November, the Siting Board issued a written decision that elaborated on its oral decision and more fully detailed its reasons for the denial. Invenergy chose not to seek court review of the Siting Board's decision, meaning that the proposal is officially dead.

NEXT STEPS

Rhode Island's rejection of the Invenergy proposal is a victory for CLF and for the entire region. However, New England remains overly reliant on fracked gas as a heating and power source. The region must break its addiction to this fossil fuel if it is going to cut its climate-damaging emissions.

CLF will keep up its fight against dirty power plants throughout New England. The organization is also working to pass binding climate laws in every state, as it has done in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Maine. These laws mandate that states lower their polluting emissions year after year, helping the region avoid the worst impacts of climate change. With a strong statewide climate law, Rhode Island will be better protected from unnecessary polluting power plants like Invenergy's. ♦

VICTORY IN RHODE ISLAND

A Brief History

Many of CLF's most significant victories have taken years to achieve. Legal finesse, committed partners, passionate supporters – all are key to ensuring CLF can see these big fights through to the end. The fight against Invenergy was no exception.

2015

Invenergy announces plans to build a fossil fuel power plant in Burrillville, Rhode Island. CLF intervenes and joins the people of Burrillville to fight the proposal.

2016

The facts become clear:

- Rhode Island doesn't need, or want, this dirty fracked gas.
- Invenergy has exaggerated projected cost savings for electricity customers.
- The plant would have devastating climate impacts.

2017

Opposition grows: 35 cities and towns in Rhode Island, Connecticut, and Massachusetts pass resolutions opposing the plant.

Invenergy is disqualified from an annual auction by the region's energy grid operator – proof that the plant's electricity isn't needed.

CLF sues Invenergy, claiming the company's contract to obtain water needed to run its plant from the Town of Johnston is illegal.

2018

Final hearings begin at the Energy Facility Siting Board to decide the fate of the plant. The long fight against the plant delays construction, prompting the regional grid operator to cancel a key energy contract with Invenergy – yet more proof that the plant is not needed.

2019

Final hearings continue. During testimony, CLF shows that the plant isn't needed, would harm valuable forest areas, and would damage our climate. The Siting Board agrees, denying Invenergy a permit. **No fracked gas power plant will be built in Burrillville.**

Zack Porter



As Lake Champlain Lakekeeper®, Zack Porter works on the ground with communities, at the state house with legislators, and hand in hand with partners to restore Vermont's iconic waterbody to health.

1 You fell in love with Lake Champlain as a child – can you tell us about your earliest experiences on the lake?

I grew up in Boston, and my grandparents lived on Lake Champlain. My earliest memories all revolve around taking the ferry to visit them and keeping a lookout for Champ, the fabled lake monster. As a kid, there's something magical about stepping onto a boat on one shore and disembarking some place else entirely. I fell in love with the New England landscape young, and, years later, the lake and its surroundings haven't lost their magic.

2 Now that you're protecting the lake, what are your top priorities?

My passion is for creating connected and protected natural areas, which will also improve water quality, trap carbon, and provide critical habitat for fish and wildlife.

Lake Champlain is a barometer for the health of the entire watershed. If the lake is in trouble, then things are amiss upstream. I'm excited as Lakekeeper to work with communities throughout the watershed to return the lake's health to the point where we don't have to question if it's safe to swim, fish, or drink.

That means building on the nearly 20 years of progress made by past Lakekeepers and the talented legal team at CLF Vermont to improve water quality standards for Lake Champlain. We will continue to clean up pollution around the expansive watershed, but also look at natural solutions, like preserving and restoring forests and wetlands and removing dams.

3 How will you work with all of the different communities connected to the lake? How can Vermonters get involved and make a difference?

Lake Champlain is the largest body of freshwater in the U.S. after the Great Lakes. It supplies drinking water for 200,000 people, and yet portions of the lake become dead zones every summer due to excess nutrient pollution. In the coming months, my focus will be listening and learning, then charting a plan forward.

In the Lake Champlain Basin, climate change will lead to more frequent and intense storms, putting low-income and overburdened communities in danger of flooding. Our buildings, homes, and roads weren't built to withstand this kind

of extreme weather, and we should make sure these environmental justice communities are protected first.

4 How do your previous jobs as a wilderness ranger and a wilderness protector shape how you approach this position?

Wild places shaped my outlook on life from an early age, and they inspire my work today. With the climate and extinction crises upon us, we have a moral obligation to act as guardians of what few wild places remain and as advocates for rewilding degraded land and water. Restoring natural processes and native species isn't just the ethical thing to do, it's ultimately in our own self-interest. When the Champlain Basin's natural communities thrive, its human communities and economies will thrive as well.

5 After years of living and working in the western United States, what are you most excited to come back to in New England?

I'm looking forward to bringing my passion for wild places and wildlife home to New England. I'm excited to help rewild Lake Champlain and to help people see the wild in their own backyard. ♦



AROUND CLF

MAINE

CLF and its allies celebrated in June when Governor Janet Mills signed a landmark bill that sets ambitious goals to slash carbon pollution and prepare the state for the effects of climate change. A key component of the bill is the creation of a 39-member Climate Council, which will recommend strategies for meeting the law's goals. CLF legal advocates will be at the table as part of the Council's working groups to develop the policies and legislation that will shape the law's implementation.

MASSACHUSETTS

As a result of CLF's 2018 lawsuit – and in a win for clean water on Cape Cod – the Wequassett Resort and Golf Club will take action to stem its nutrient pollution, which fuels toxic algae outbreaks in Pleasant Bay. A recent report by the Association to Preserve Cape Cod found that two-thirds of the Cape's bays and one-third of its ponds suffer from nutrient pollution.

The Wequassett's actions serve as an example for towns, property owners, and other resorts to follow in protecting the Cape's economy and way of life from this toxic threat.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

A recent independent water quality report has found that the largest polluter of New Hampshire's Merrymeeting River is the state Fish and Game Department. The report validates CLF's assertions that pollution from the agency's Powder Mill State Fish Hatchery is causing toxic algae outbreaks in the river. CLF is suing the state to force the hatchery to end its illegal pollution of the river and help restore the waterway to health.

RHODE ISLAND

This past legislative session, CLF helped prevent a statewide single-use bag ban that would have done more harm than good by wiping out stronger

bans already passed in individual cities and towns. Half of Rhode Island residents live in a community with a plastic bag ordinance, with Providence's the latest to go into effect in October. In the upcoming legislative session, CLF will again push for a robust statewide ban on plastic bags, polystyrene, and stirrers, plus limits on plastic straws.

VERMONT

CLF is pushing the State to prioritize Vermonters' health and the environment as it considers whether to grant the Coventry Landfill a permit to expand. At issue is how the landfill can safely dispose of its leachate – chemical-laden pollution generated when water seeps through a landfill's waste pile. Currently, leachate is collected and trucked to wastewater treatment plants that aren't designed to remove harmful chemicals. CLF will engage in the permitting process to ensure that the expansion does not advance without safeguards to protect health and the environment.

TAKE ACTION!
Your Voice Matters

Speak up and take action on the issues that matter to you across New England. Sign up for CLF emails so you'll be the first to know when we need your help.
www.clf.org/signup

Other ways to keep up to date:

- CLF's blog: clf.org/blog/
- Twitter: @clfc
- Facebook: facebook.com/TheCLF

CONSERVATION MATTERS

THE JOURNAL OF CONSERVATION LAW FOUNDATION | VOLUME XXIX, NO. 3 | FALL 2019 | ISSN 1521-9941

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Too often when it comes to solving our biggest environmental challenges, the burden of responsibility falls on the shoulders of individuals.

Plastic manufacturers are especially fond of this “blame the consumer” game. With their products wreaking havoc on our oceans and climate, and the recycling crisis causing huge deficits in city and town budgets, these corporate polluters are content to sit back and point fingers – at you, me, and every other consumer who ever bought a bottled water or drank their soda through a straw.

Individual change does play a role, but it cannot solve our plastic crisis alone. Yes, we can all recycle more, switch to reusable bottles and containers, and start composting. And if we can, we should. But the reality is, many plastics that end up in the recycling stream are never actually recycled.

Ultimately, creating a zero-waste future requires action by lawmakers, manufacturers, and retailers, among others. We must change the way products are made and packaged, rethink what gets thrown away and what gets reused, and reform our recycling system.

The best way to help create this future is as a constituent, putting pressure on state legislators to pass bag bans and zero-waste laws... as a consumer, pushing manufacturers to change their polluting products... and as a customer, asking local stores to stock items with less wasteful packaging.

What’s not helpful? Plastic manufacturers (or environmental groups) making us feel guilty about our personal choices. When you’re entangled in a dysfunctional system – like the one that governs how we manage our trash and its disposal – it can be hard to see the paths to change from the inside.

Only when you can view that system from the outside can you find the cracks in it that will help tear it down. That’s why reforming any system begins with educating ourselves and the people around us – and demanding change from our elected officials.

So don’t let manufacturers get away with the false narrative that it’s up to you and me to recycle our way out of this plastic crisis. It’s time to call them out as the real culprits and put the burden on their shoulders, not ours.

Gratefully,

Bradley Campbell, *President*

Bradley Campbell
President

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Printing by: Journeyman Press
Cover photo: chaiyapruetk youprasert via Shutterstock