

# Turning Plastic into Fossil Fuel is Dirty and Dangerous Oppose SB 1115 and HB 2485



House Bill 2485 and Senate Bill 1115 would allow the conversion of plastic into fuel and other products without requiring a solid waste processing facility permit. The processes described are dangerous. They release toxins that harm our health and the health of our children.

## Toxic and Harmful

What is being called "advanced recycling" will lead to the creation of new contaminants, including high concentrations of dioxin, furans, heavy metals (mercury, cadmium, and lead), and particulates. These toxins can cause cancer, reproductive and developmental problems, damage to the immune system, interfere with hormones and damage children's brains.



## Not Recycling

The bills misname the processes to which they refer as "advanced recycling". In practice, the chemical conversion of plastic is generally not being used to create new plastic, but to transform plastic back into fossil fuel for combustion, which is not recycling. Despite 50 years of experimentation, the technology for chemical conversion of plastic is not mature and is not delivering on conversion of plastic to plastic. With the possible exception of one plant in Kingsport, Tennessee, no plastic-to-plastic operation that has been taken to scale. Almost all of the plastic in these operations is being transformed back into contaminated fossil fuel and burned. A 2020 report by Greenpeace examined projects promoted by the American Chemistry Council to divert plastic waste from landfills, finding that "none of the plastic-to-plastic projects...show promise of becoming viable. This means that very little of this investment [in chemical recycling] has a chance of reducing plastic production or pollution, and ensures years of fossil-based plastic pollution."

## No Solution to the Plastics Crisis

We face a real crisis of plastic overproduction that threatens our land, oceans, wildlife, and human health. This crisis was caused largely by excessive production of cheap, single-use plastic with the knowledge decades ago that mechanical recycling of plastic would never be adequate to address plastic waste created. The majority of "advanced recycling" operations do nothing but deepen the crisis. Each stage of the process demands a lot of energy, has an enormous carbon footprint, and generates large carbon impacts.

**SB 1115 is sponsored by Senator O'Laughlin and HB 2485 is sponsored by Representative Knight and has been passed the House.**

Sources: Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA). 2020. "All Talk and No Recycling: An Investigation of the U.S. 'Chemical Recycling' Industry. Berkeley, California. [www.no-burn.org/chemical-recycling-us](http://www.no-burn.org/chemical-recycling-us); Deception by the Numbers: American Chemistry Council claims about chemical recycling investments fail to hold up to scrutiny. Greenpeace Reports, September 9, 2020, p. 3. [www.greenpeace.org/use/research/deception-by-the-numbers/](http://www.greenpeace.org/use/research/deception-by-the-numbers/); Plastic Wars (<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/plastic-wars/>), produced by PBS, and The Story of Plastic (<https://www.storyofplastic.org/>), produced by The Story of Stuff Project.

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