



Overview

Petrochemicals come from fossil fuels, often that are fracked for very cheap, and are used to make single-use plastics. As we transition to renewable energy and the demand for oil and gas decreases, extraction is becoming less profitable. As a result, companies are now turning their focus to refining the oil and gas into petrochemicals used to make more plastic.

While petrochemical companies promise economic benefits, they often bring in their own workers rather than hire locally for jobs in petrochemical and plastic facilities. The facilities - predominantly located in low-income areas and communities of color - pose major health risks and can also force schools, churches, and homes to relocate, leaving communities with the choice of staying and risking their health or negotiating a buyout and abandoning their homes.

Legislation

Legislators can address petrochemicals through regulation of toxic chemicals and reductions in plastic pollution.

Toxic Chemical Regulation

- Pennsylvania's [HB 1302](#) closes a loophole regarding state laws governing the disposal of toxic drilling waste. Oil and gas companies would no longer be exempt from thoroughly testing or treating waste prior to disposal.

Reducing Plastic Pollution

- Oregon's EPR for Packaging bill ([SB582](#)) builds on local community programs and leverages the resources of producers to create an innovative recycling system for all. The bill [requires packaging producers to share responsibility](#) for effective management of their products after use.
- Maine's EPR for Packaging bill ([HP 1146](#)) requires packaging producers to pay a fee for the total amount of packaging material introduced into the state's waste stream. Through Product Stewardship Organizations (PSO), producers will reimburse municipalities for the costs of managing their waste and improving recycling infrastructure.

KEY POINTS

- Plastic contributes to climate change at every step of its lifecycle, from extraction to waste management. ([Debris Free Oceans](#))
- Petrochemical and plastic facilities pose severe health threats to nearby residents and are disproportionately located in communities of color and low-income areas. ([Sierra Club](#))
- 99% of plastic is made from fossil fuels. ([CIEL](#))
- The fracking boom has fueled an expansion of plastic production and created a flood of single-use plastics. ([Surfrider](#))
- The petrochemical industry is spending over \$200 billion on more than 300 different plastics projects across the U.S. ([CIEL](#))

Other Resources

- [The Hidden Costs of a Plastic Planet](#)
- [How Plastics Contribute to Climate Change](#)
- [Factsheet on Oregon's EPR bill](#)

