

Testimony about Recycling Plastic Codes

It's not climate change that needs to be tackled. It's the political power of the fossil fuel industry. Richard Denniss, Chief Economist

That is why society needs to stop the plastic industries push for recycling the nightmare, which is plastic trash. It's completely confusing for the average consumer because there's no rhyme or reason to the codes. We use 5-gallon water bottles in our office. Some bottles will have a PET #1 symbol and an identical bottle will have a #7 symbol, which stands for "other." Both bottles contain BPA, which leach phthalates, a known carcinogen. Without looking for the code, you wouldn't think there is any difference in the chemical compounds for those containers. And you would be wrong.

In order for Newland Park Landfill to sort contaminants out of our recycling, we rely on work-release inmates because we do not have the financial means to purchase a multimillion-dollar optic sorter. Currently, we can only find minimally profitable plastics markets for baled numbers 1 and 2 that are narrow-necked containers. Those figures have gone from 2019 prices of \$.15 per pound for PET, \$.40 per pound for HDPE Natural and \$.17 per pound for HDPE Colored. Those numbers are consistently dropping. And finding companies to bid on it is even more difficult when all of your baled recycling has to go over a bridge to get back to a location that can actually recycle it back into a recyclable product. If you were to see the mountain of plastic recycling that has to be sorted by sight, you would have a much clearer picture of how daunting that task can be.

Instead of the plastic industry spending millions on buying votes and convincing the public that it's an easily recyclable product. How about they actually find ways to be transparent about the actual chemical compounds each plastic product is composed of and just how dangerous those chemicals are for consumers and the environment. We are all moving away from fossil fuels for vehicles, which is a wonderful thing. So how does the industry continue making billions? They ramp up production of plastic packaging trash and convince us that we're the crazy ones if we don't recycle it!

It just needs to stop being their future cash cow at the cost of every living creature on Earth.