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plasticpollutioncoalition

Over 100 Local, State, National, and International NGOs Demand No “Lies in Labeling;” Call on California Agencies to Enforce Laws That Protect Consumers and End Plastic Waste Dumping Abroad

April 2, 2024

On March 29, over 100 California, U.S., and international environmental Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs) sent a [letter](#) to CalRecycle, California Secretary for Environmental Protection Yana Garcia, and California Attorney General Rob Bonta, urging factual reporting, implementation and enforcement of California’s plastics laws.

In 2021, California passed two laws related to plastics that were intended to protect consumers from false recyclability labels (SB343)¹ and foreign countries from receiving contaminated plastic waste bales from California (AB881).²

Instead of effectively managing plastic waste within the state and implementing source reduction efforts that reduce this waste, California is instead exporting a massive amount of contaminated baled plastic waste labeled as “recycling” to countries lacking infrastructure to manage it, and weak labor, health, and environmental laws—where the plastic is unlikely to ever be “recycled.”

CalRecycle’s own data proves that exported plastic waste bales do not comply with CA AB881, the state’s recycling plastic waste export law, but facility-level information was not shared with the public, which makes public-driven enforcement impossible.

The NGO comment letter urges CalRecycle to revise and correct their [SB343 Material Characterization Study Preliminary Findings Report](#) to truthfully show that consumer plastics are

¹ California Code, [Public Resources Code - PRC § 42355.51](#)

² California Code, [Public Resources Code § 41781.4](#)

PRESS RELEASE

not recyclable in California, and to call on CA State Attorney General Rob Bonta to investigate material compliance to MRF requirements of AB881 to protect foreign communities from California's contaminated plastic waste bales. The letter expresses support of the [Fact Briefing and Recommendations made in the detailed, comprehensive SB343 Fact Briefing Report](#) (published on Feb. 12, 2024, by Basel Action Network and The Last Beach Cleanup).

Many countries are affected by the illegal waste trade coming out of California and the U.S. The NGOs signed on to the letter are state, national, and global groups, along with grassroots groups in Australia, Egypt, Europe, Ghana, Indonesia, Mexico, Malaysia, Nigeria, and Thailand.

"It is time for California to turn the tide on false reporting and recycling claims and enforce existing truth in labeling and Illegal plastic waste export laws." –Jackie Nuñez, Founder of The Last Plastic Straw and Advocacy & Engagement Manager at Plastic Pollution Coalition

"CalRecycle's false approach to determine sortation of plastics must be corrected to ensure truthful packaging labels under SB343, which also ensures truthful determination of what is recyclable under California's SB54 Plastic Pollution Prevention and Producer Responsibility Act." – Jan Dell, Independent Engineer & Founder of The Last Beach Cleanup

"Californians pushed hard for laws that would make California's recycling programs compatible with the Basel Convention, a global treaty which controls global dumping of wastes. Yet now we have discovered that rather than implementing the law as they are charged to do, CalRecycle appears intent on ignoring it while providing pathways to push California waste to Mexico. It is morally, environmentally, and legally unacceptable." –Jim Puckett, Executive Director of the Basel Action Network (BAN)

Read the full [letter here](#), and learn more about [What Really Happens to Your Plastic Recycling](#). Also, on Friday April 5 (10 am–12 pm PDT/11 am–1 pm CDMX), join a [virtual conversation about U.S. plastic waste colonialism in Mexico](#), presented in English and Spanish.

About Plastic Pollution Coalition: *Plastic Pollution Coalition is a non-profit communications and advocacy organization that collaborates with an expansive global alliance of organizations, businesses, and individuals to create a more just, equitable, regenerative world free of plastic pollution and its toxic impacts.*
www.plasticpollutioncoalition.org

About The Last Beach Cleanup: *The Last Beach Cleanup volunteers lead catalytic initiatives to move from awareness on plastic pollution to wide scale action and achievement. Founded by an independent engineer, The Last Beach Cleanup focuses on bringing the facts to the forefront to promote proven and practical solutions to plastic pollution. For more information, see www.lastbeachcleanup.org.*

PRESS RELEASE

About Basel Action Network: *Founded in 1997, the Basel Action Network (BAN) is a 501(c)3 charitable organization of the United States, based in Seattle, WA. BAN is the world's only organization focused on confronting the global environmental justice and economic inefficiency of toxic trade and its devastating impacts. Today, BAN serves as the information clearinghouse on the subject of waste trade for journalists, academics, and the general public. Through its investigations, BAN uncovered the tragedy of hazardous electronic waste dumping in developing countries. For more information, see www.BAN.org.*

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