**How Packaging Stewardship Will Help Solve NYS’s Recycling Crisis**

Recycling is our state’s greatest team effort. Millions of New York residents, including here in **[COUNTY],** set out or drop off their cardboard boxes, plastic bottles, glass jars, metal cans, and other items each week. Recycling programs reduce waste and greenhouse gas emissions, support thousands of green sector jobs across the state, and preserve limited landfill space.

Today, recycling programs across New York are struggling to survive. The value of recyclable materials does not cover the cost to collect, sort, process, and market these items. Statewide, municipalities shell out millions of dollars each year to manage recycling programs, but we still lose an estimated 860,000 tons of potentially recyclable materials to trash. Due to extreme volatility in recyclable commodities markets, municipalities are faced with costly — and risky — contracts with service providers. Every day, we face the stark reality that it is often cheaper to landfill or incinerate materials than to recycle them. **In [Local Government Name], recycling costs exceed $\_\_\_\_\_ per year. [Insert any additional local recycling challenges – have you been forced to scale back or pause services?]**

Our current recycling system places unreasonable burdens on local governments to collect, manage, and market recyclables while consumer brand owners have complete control over which materials are placed on the market in the first place. Brand owners are disconnected from the end-of-life management of the packaging they choose for their products and, increasingly, this packaging is neither reusable nor recyclable, ending up in landfills, at energy recovery plants, or littering the environment. Consumer brands have little incentive to reduce packaging waste, make packaging easier to recycle, or boost market demand by using more recycled content. Furthermore, our patchwork of local recycling programs means materials that are accepted for recycling in one community may be rejected in the next, resulting in widespread consumer confusion and frustration.

**We need to change this paradigm if we expect to address our state’s solid waste crisis.** We cannot continue to ask local governments and taxpayers to manage the increasingly complex and costly array of packaging materials flooding the market while the brands who profit from using these materials are left off the hook.

Senator Pete Harckham and Assemblymember Deborah Glick sponsor legislation called the Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act to require consumer brands to finance the recycling of their packaging and invest in expanding and modernizing local recycling infrastructure so programs can handle new packaging materials as well as those not currently recycled. If enacted, funding from producers would insulate local governments like **[LOCAL GOV NAME]** from the significant financial risks we currently face to manage recycling programs. Crucially, the program will provide the funds necessary to expand recycling services to underserved communities to ensure that all New Yorkers can recycle.

Enacting the Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act could **triple recycling rates for residential materials** in New York. Existing packaging stewardship programs around the world have achieved recycling rates over 70%, with contamination rates well below 10%. By comparison, New York’s average recycling rate is an abysmal 18%, and average contamination rates in the U.S. are over 25%. Recycling more material will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by **over 2.3 million metric tons each year**, equal to taking half a million cars off the road. The legislation will also incentivize producers to generate less packaging overall and make the packaging they do use nontoxic and easier to reuse and recycle, fostering a circular economy for New York.

New Yorkers deserve a modern, effective recycling system. We urge all New York residents to voice their support for the Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act to reinvigorate recycling, reduce waste, and put an end to the undue financial burdens on municipalities, taxpayers, and ratepayers across the state.

*[Name, Position, and Local Government Name]*