The Discards Hierarchy

Rethink

Reduce

Reuse

Repair

Recycle

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Recycling Hubs Recently Shuttered – Silver City, Carlsbad

Recycling Hubs Have Stopped Accepting Items – Estancia Valley (paper & plastic), Taos (plastic), Deming (unclear selling to private hauler), Ruidoso (paper), Las Vegas (plastics & paper)

Recycling & diversion rate unknown (2015 last date)

Many communities are committed to keeping their recycling programs going despite increased processing costs
What do you do first?
Turn off the faucet or grab a mop?

Zero Waste is a Concept that Covers Rethink, Reduce, Reuse, Repair & Recycle

Zero Waste International Alliance Definition: Zero Waste is a goal that is ethical, economical, efficient and visionary, to guide people in changing their lifestyles and practices to emulate sustainable natural cycles, where all discarded materials are designed to become resources for others to use.

Zero Waste means designing and managing products and processes to systematically avoid and eliminate the volume and toxicity of waste and materials, conserve and recover all resources, and not burn or bury them (Pollution Prevention!)

Implementing Zero Waste will eliminate all discharges to land, water or air that are a threat to planetary, human, animal or plant health

Divert 90% and No Burn, No Bury. This means waste to energy is NOT Zero Waste.
Zero Waste – Current Starting Point

Organics – The Low Hanging Fruit

- Nearly 30% of America’s Municipal Solid Waste is organic material.
- When landfilled organic materials decompose without oxygen to make methane, a greenhouse gas at least 21% more potent than CO2
- Use City’s biannual yard debris curbside clean up
- Start your own backyard composting system
- Don’t want to do it yourself? Utilize businesses, such as Little Green Bucket or Soilutions
When it comes to the global waste crisis, we’re trying to reduce, reuse, repair and recycle an unmanageable volume and type of material.

We need to refuse to continue within this broken system and RETHINK the way we manage waste.

Who wants this? NO ONE. Could it be turned into anything else in this state? NO.
Zero Waste/Reduce - INDIVIDUAL level
Zero Waste/Rethink & Reduce – SYSTEMATIC level
Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is a mandatory type of product stewardship that includes, at a minimum, the requirement that the producer’s responsibility for their product extends to post-consumer management of that product and its packaging. There are two related features of EPR policy: (1) shifting financial and management responsibility, with government oversight, upstream to the producer and away from the public sector; and (2) providing incentives to producers to incorporate environmental considerations into the design of their products and packaging.

Example: Mattress, Carpet, Paint or Other Items Required to Be Taken Back Through Industry Paid For Efforts, PACKAGING
Shell's Newest “Cracking” Plant in Pennsylvania

1 million tons of new plastic each year.
Eight states—California, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, New York, Oregon and Vermont (also straws and Styrofoam coffee cups and take out containers) —have banned single-use plastic bags.

In NM – Cities of Santa Fe, Albuquerque, Bernalillo County (includes Styrofoam take out containers and straws) and Silver City have some sort of single-use plastic ban (paused due to COVID)

Cities of Carlsbad and Las Cruces considering bag bans

Individual businesses banning single use plastic
Our Individual Actions & Demands are creating a Tipping Point for Systems Change
BREAK FREE FROM PLASTIC POLLUTION ACT

Introduced by Senator Tom Udall and Representative Alan Lowenthal
Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act

Source Reduction
- Plastic Carry-Out Bags - 10 cent fee on all other Carry-out bags
- Plastic Utensils
- Styrofoam food and drinkware
- Styrofoam coolers & shipping packaging (medical exceptions)
- Straws available upon request

Producer Responsibility
- Packaging, containers, food service products & paper - All materials (plastic, glass, metal, paper) - Regardless of recyclability/compostability
- Producer Responsibility Organizations (PRO)
- Collection/Reuse/Recycling Targets
- Major investment in U.S. domestic recycling/composting infrastructure

National Container Deposit
- 10-cent national refund for all beverage containers - All material (plastic, glass, metal)
- Modeled off Oregon’s bottle bill - Producers use unclaimed deposits for investment in recycling
- Existing state programs can continue or harmonize
Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act

Post Consumer Recycled Content from US Sources
- Plastic beverage bottles - 25% by 2025, 30% by 2030, 50% by 2035, 80% by 2040
- Other covered products/beverage containers
- EPA and National Institute of Standards and Technology set percentages

Recycling
- Define recycling and recyclable - Processing capacity in U.S. and geographical distribution
- Standardize product labels
- Standardize receptacle labeling

Plastic Waste Exports
- Ban on export of plastic waste, scrap and pairings to developing countries.
- Export permitted to OECD countries (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development)

Other Provisions
- Cigarette Butts – Electronic Cigarette Cartridges – Derelict Fishing Gear
- Protect State Action
- Temporary Pause on New Plastic Production Facilities - Up to three years while Federal Agencies study impacts and update regulations
Reuse & Repair
NMRC received USDA funding this month to work with rural communities to physically implement the grassroots waste reduction solutions, including reuse centers, Fix It Clinics, back yard composting trainings & zero waste efforts.
As a Concerned Citizen What Can You Do?

Knowledge is power. Host a litter clean up and Brand Audit in your neighborhood – learn more at https://www.breakfreefromplastic.org/brandaudittoolkit/

Compost your food scraps and yard waste

Recycle Correctly!

Support Zero Waste Policy

- Single use plastic bans
- Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act