



New Bill Seeks to Protect Frontline Communities From Plastics Pollution

Description



One of the main dangers of plastics is the harm that their production and incineration can do to the health of the people who live nearby. Plastics plants are one of the main factors polluting the air of Louisiana’s Cancer Alley, for example. Now, a group of U.S. lawmakers are seeking to address this environmental justice issue through the newly introduced Protecting Communities from Plastics Act. “Plastic pollution isn’t just a problem for our oceans and climate — it’s a massive environmental injustice, directly impacting frontline and fenceline communities throughout the plastics lifecycle,” U.S.

Representative Jared Huffman (D-CA), who introduced the bill, said in a statement emailed to EcoWatch. “My bill will protect the health of our communities, reduce greenhouse gas emissions fueling the climate crisis, and stop the fossil fuel industry’s petro-dictatorship as it eyes plastics as a safety net. The clock is ticking, and we will keep working on this next Congress — but we are sending a message here and now to put oil and gas companies on notice. Our communities must come first.” Huffman introduced the bill Thursday alongside Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ) and Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR) and Representative Alan Lowenthal (D-CA), who are the legislative team behind the Break Free from Plastic Pollution Act. The bill would both tighten health and environmental regulations for plastics makers and set national targets for reducing the production of certain single-use plastics and for encouraging reusable materials in food and other packaging. The bill’s sponsors also emphasized the contribution that the production and use of plastics — which are set to double over the next 10 years — make to the climate crisis. “As we transition to clean and renewable energy, fossil-based plastic production threatens to derail our efforts to address the climate crisis,” Booker said in a statement emailed to EcoWatch. “In fenceline communities that are near plastic production plants, residents suffer from the release of harmful pollutants and increased rates of debilitating health conditions such as cancer and heart disease. To address these environmental injustices, I am proud to introduce this legislation that will create nationwide targets for plastic source reduction and put a pause on the permitting of new and expanded plastic facilities while the EPA updates regulations for plastic facilities.”

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Author

thecirculareconomyteam

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