

False Solutions for Waste: Why They Fail People and the Planet

WHAT ARE FALSE SOLUTIONS?

Technologies or policies that **claim to solve the waste and climate crisis but instead uphold linear, extractive systems, exacerbating the waste crisis and climate change.** They ignore root causes, harm communities, and distract from proven, community-led zero waste practices.

- ⊗ Harm frontline and low-income communities
- ⊗ Delay meaningful action and climate targets
- ⊗ Justify overproduction and consumption
- ⊗ Waste public money and political will
- ⊗ Undermine and distract from real zero waste alternatives



Recycling alone isn't enough.

While it has a role in the waste hierarchy, it places too much responsibility on consumers and overlooks the need for broader waste solutions.

EXAMPLES OF FALSE SOLUTIONS



Waste-to-Energy (WtE) incineration / cement kiln co-processing / gasification, pyrolysis. Pollutes air, destroys resources.



Refuse derived fuel (RDF)
Pollutes air, distracts from real solutions.



Chemical recycling / advanced recycling. Energy-intensive, unproven at scale.



Plastic-to-fuel facilities / open loop plastic recycling / biobased plastics. Waste utilization to roads delays and veers away from zero waste solutions.



Plastic credits. As already seen with carbon credits, offsetting schemes delay or shift away from real solutions.

THE REAL SOLUTIONS

Quick, positive alternatives:

- ✓ Source reduction
- ✓ Composting & recovery of organics
- ✓ Reuse systems
- ✓ Inclusive recycling led by waste pickers
- ✓ Community engagement throughout the waste systems
- ✓ Policy change driving waste prevention and diversion from disposal

