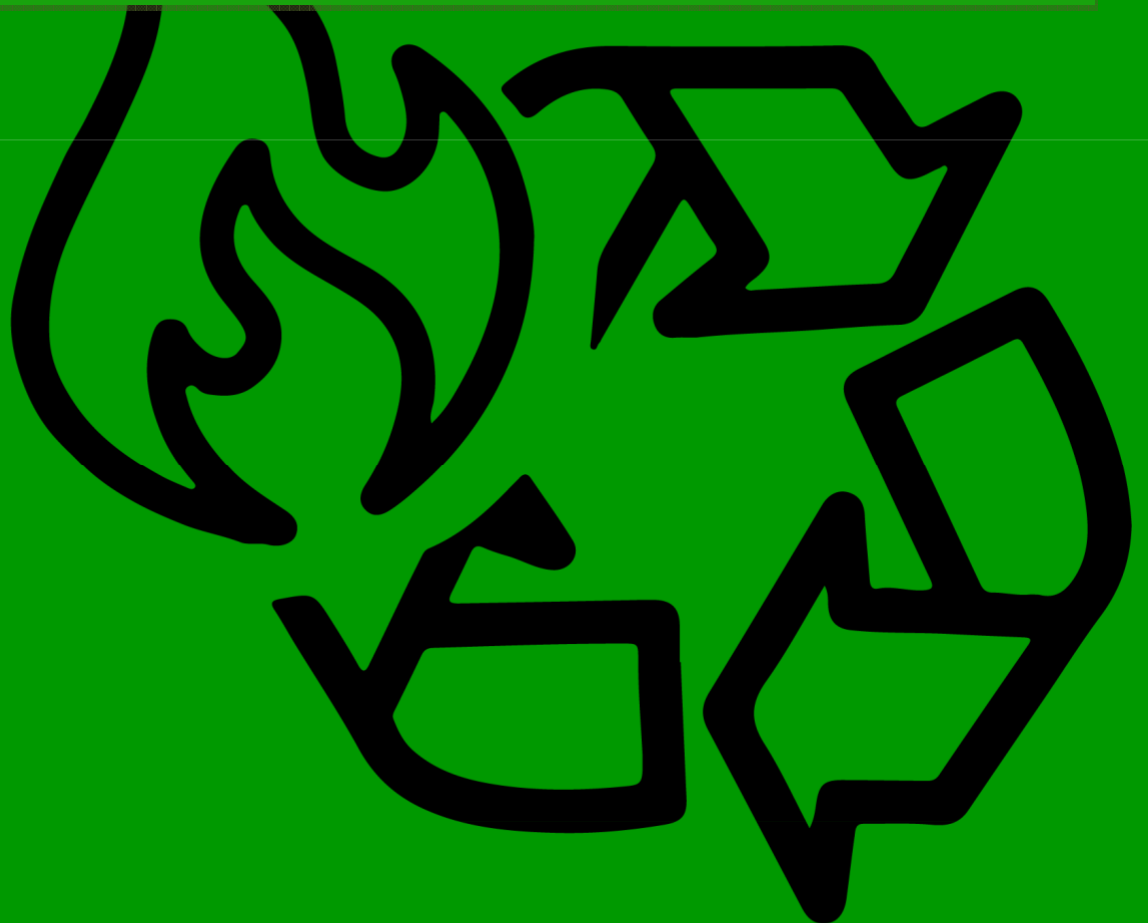


**motion to strengthen  
the selective collection  
with the integration of  
waste pickers against  
the incineration of  
household solid waste**



# CONTEXT

COVID-19 is an airborne disease caused by the Coronavirus Sars-CoV-2 that, in addition to health problems, highlighted the deep social inequality that exists in Brazil. Several segments of society are experiencing serious situations of social exclusion and vulnerability. All public policies and social, environmental and economic initiatives must necessarily include emergency care for these populations and also resolve structural problems that affect them.

Seeking to safeguard the conditions for the continuity of the work of waste pickers and their associations and cooperatives in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, we present the following considerations and proposals.

COVID-19 is a transitory situation and it is worth mentioning that waste to energy (WTE) cannot be considered a form of recycling, as it destroys materials that must return to the productive chain in the form of new products. Recycling with the participation of waste pickers promotes a circular economy, promotes environment conservation and generates more jobs than incineration. This position is widely supported by international institutions and networks, such as GAIA (Global Alliance For Incinerator Alternatives), Agenda 2030, Break Free From Plastic and Human Rights organizations.



## CONSIDERING THAT:

1. COVID-19 is an airborne disease caused by the Coronavirus Sars-CoV-2, which is easily transmitted, mainly from person to person. Contact with surfaces where the virus might be settled can also initiate the infection, but at a lower risk level, provided that due care is taken with the use of personal protection and hygiene equipment;
2. Health Service Waste (HSW) represents less than 2% of total Urban Solid Waste (USW). According to the WHO, of all HSW only 15% is considered waste with biological (high viral load) and chemical risk that need treatment before final disposal and a small portion is radioactive waste that must wait for its decay time. Therefore, 85% of HSW is considered common waste and of that portion, about 50% can be recycled or composted and the waste collected as USW; [https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/85349/9789241548564\\_eng.pdf?sequence=1](https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/85349/9789241548564_eng.pdf?sequence=1)
3. For people who are in isolation at home, with a positive diagnosis for COVID-19, or who feel its symptoms, the document from the State of São Paulo can be a reference for the adoption of extra care, according to instructions from the CVS Statement available at: <https://bit.ly/2M6FXyt>. This document also includes recommendations for urban cleaning and health services. It is important to highlight that the residues of symptomatic individuals or people in isolation should not be sent to selective collection, but to conventional domestic collection, until they are completely recovered;



## CONSIDERING THAT:

4. There is an opportunistic movement aimed at transmitting the mistaken idea that the incineration of Health Service Waste and Urban Solid Waste would bring greater protection to society in the face of the risk of epidemics - that is, equalizing the urban waste generated during the pandemic as Health Service Waste. In fact, this is a fallacy, under the attempt to justify incineration;
5. The incineration of Urban Solid Waste is a high cost process and demands strict safety criteria to reduce environmental risks due to the release of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) into the atmosphere, the generation of ash with a high level of contamination by heavy metals and GHG emissions (Greenhouse Gases). It also destroys raw materials and job posts. It should be noted that the HSW that needs treatment is mostly made up of plastics and if incinerated they also release POPs, mainly dioxins and furans (highly carcinogenic substances). Environmentally friendly technologies such as steam treatment (autoclaving) are recommended by the WHO and also the Stockholm Convention.  
[https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/85349/9789241548564\\_eng.pdf?sequence=1](https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/85349/9789241548564_eng.pdf?sequence=1)
6. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends, due to the pandemic, that household and commercial solid waste, those generated in homes and businesses in general, be collected and disposed of according to usual practices, with no need for any additional treatment, but that hygiene care and the use of safety equipment by professionals in the collection should be redoubled. The World Health Organization, as well as the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), have endorsed methods of steam-based disinfection or others that do not incinerate due to persistent organic pollutants (POPs) produced by incineration. Capturing energy from burning waste is the most polluting and expensive way of generating energy.  
<https://apps.who.int/iris/rest/bitstreams/1272420/retrieve>



7. Most of the urban waste generated is recyclable and compostable and it would be absurd to promote its destruction! See more in the Manifesto Against the Destruction of Solid Urban Waste - For Zero Wastage; [\(http://residuozero.org.br/manifesto-contra-a-destruicao--dos-residuos-solidos-urbanos-por-desperdicio-zero/\)](http://residuozero.org.br/manifesto-contra-a-destruicao--dos-residuos-solidos-urbanos-por-desperdicio-zero/)
8. The manufacturer, importer, distributor, and trader have not fully taken their responsibility for the cost of waste pickers' compensation for the service of sorting the materials, as well as for the cost of the selective collection of the recyclable fraction of household waste, as determined by the National Policy on Solid Waste (2010); producing a situation of absolute vulnerability of this category in the context of the pandemic. With rare exceptions, there is a historical process of omission, at all levels, by governments, and also by the productive sector, regarding effective measures for structuring the work of cooperatives and associations of waste pickers and recyclable material collectors, which must be overcome.



## WE PROPOSE THAT:

1. The municipalities resume the selective collection of recyclables in the country, promoting the strengthening of the associations and cooperatives of waste pickers with guaranteed job security, after the end of social isolation, in places where this service was interrupted. This guideline must become permanent, which will benefit the entire recycling production chain.
2. Municipal governments accelerate the process of closing down activities in dumps, as they prevent any possibility of safeguarding minimum sanitary conditions and human dignity under any circumstances and especially during these pandemic times. The urgency of the closure must be linked to the necessary process of transition to the selective collection system, with the participation of waste pickers, as established in Art. No. 17, item V, of the National Policy on Solid Waste; “obliteration and rehabilitation of dumps, measures associated with social inclusion and economic emancipation of pickers of reusable and recyclable materials”. <https://www.dpu.def.br/noticias-institucional/233-slideshow/50396-technical-note-program-zero-sanding-of-the-ministry-of-the-environment-environment>
3. Implementation of comprehensive programs for the inclusion of waste pickers in the selective collection and reverse logistics systems, via direct contracting (service provision contract), with fair remuneration for the services provided by cooperatives and associations of waste pickers, funded by the productive sector, responsible for the reverse logistics of household solid waste, according to Art.33, §1 and §7, Law No. 12,305/2010. [http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil\\_03/ato2007-2010/2010/lei/112305.htm](http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/ato2007-2010/2010/lei/112305.htm)



4. Municipal governments carry out a survey on individual waste pickers and the operating conditions of all waste picker associations and cooperatives that operate in the municipalities and are not included, in a structured manner, in existing plans and/or programs for the management of the selective collection and sorting. Based on this survey, municipal and state public authorities should create emergency support to make up for the loss of revenue due to the reduction or interruption of activities until the original pace is resumed.
5. The municipal governments guarantee infrastructure that allows the quarantine of recyclable waste in the sorting sites, reinforcing safety in the handling of the material.
6. The federal, state, and municipal governments guarantee public resources for the purchase of machinery, Individual Protection Equipment (PPE) and adequate infrastructure to ensure basic conditions for decent work for the cooperatives and associations of waste pickers in the country. These measures are an indispensable condition for their expansion and the integration of individual waste pickers. [\(http://mncr.org.br/biblioteca/publicacoes/livros-quias-e-manuais/as-atividades-dos-catadores-ea-coleta-seletiva-duran-te-e-apos-a-pandemia-da-covid-19-operational-manual /\)](http://mncr.org.br/biblioteca/publicacoes/livros-quias-e-manuais/as-atividades-dos-catadores-ea-coleta-seletiva-duran-te-e-apos-a-pandemia-da-covid-19-operational-manual/)



## WE PROPOSE THAT:

7. Municipal governments must implement the allocation of 50% of the organic fraction of the total generated daily in the country for composting and/or biodigestion, and compostable waste should not be sent to landfills, incinerators, cement plants or other destruction systems of the said material. Bearing in mind that the use of this compound brings benefits such as:
  - Reduction in public spending;
  - Promotion of regenerative agriculture;
  - Reduction in the import of synthetic agricultural nutrients, ensuring healthy food;
  - Breaking the chain of nutrient wastage in landfills (emphasis on phosphorus, a fundamental and finite nutrient);
  - The use of the compost in afforestation programs, in green areas, parks and gardens;
8. Municipal governments and the productive sector invest in broad environmental education and awareness programs, guiding the population towards the separation of recyclable waste. It should be noted that if the selective household waste collection is not done correctly (in at least three fractions), it will result in the undue production of waste.  
[https://d3nehc6yl9qzo4.cloudfront.net/downloads/coleta\\_seletiva.pdf](https://d3nehc6yl9qzo4.cloudfront.net/downloads/coleta_seletiva.pdf)
9. The approval of a legislation, built in a participatory manner, which establishes the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), given that the legislation referring to the Sectoral Agreement on Reverse Packaging Logistics, an instrument for implementing the National Solid Waste Policy, has not held companies accountable, nor has it brought effective results in the recovery of post-consumer waste in Brazil.





10. The federal, state and municipal governments comply with the National Solid Waste Policy guideline, and guarantee the order of priority in the management and handling of solid waste and do not authorize the destruction of materials that can be recycled and composted, either through incineration, cement (use of RDF) and other forms of heat treatment.
11. The Society and the Federal Government must build a National Solid Waste Plan that contains, among other goals, that of selective collection and progressive sorting of recyclables - which account for 30% to 35% of the total household solid waste. And include the 50% of household compostable waste, using a mechanism for monitoring compliance with targets and social control.
12. The society and Governments must demand that the productive sector comply with the Sustainable Production and Consumption Plan, which will promote profound changes in the production pattern of consumer goods, such as: reduction of waste generation; guarantee of the durability of products and their recycling; replacement of disposable packaging with returnable ones; use of recyclable materials, banning of disposable plastics; use of non-toxic and environmentally friendly materials.



## **SIGN THIS MOTION:**

- NATIONAL MOVEMENT OF WASTE PICKERS
- PÓLIS INSTITUTE - STUDIES, TRAINING, SOCIAL POLICY ADVISORY
- IDEC - BRAZILIAN INSTITUTE FOR CONSUMER PROTECTION
- PUBLIC DEFENSE OF THE UNION - WASTE PICKER WORK GROUP
- RNSP – ENVIRONMENT WORK GROUP
- COOPER PAC - SP - MNCR
- ASCAT - RGS - MNCR
- INSEA - ORIS
- NATIONAL SOLID WASTE POLICY OBSERVATORY
- ASSOCIATION CURITIBA ZERO WASTAGE - ZERO WASTAGE INSTITUTE
- HEALTHY HOSPITALS PROJECT
- GREAT ABC LIFE DEFENSE MOVEMENT
- INSTITUTO 5 ELEMENTOS - EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY
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