



A FALSE PROMISE FROM A POLLUTING INDUSTRY

- Feeling the pressure from increasingly sustainability-minded consumers and governments, the plastics industry is now promoting “chemical recycling” -- technology that turns plastic back into plastic -- as the silver bullet to solve the plastics crisis.
- However, of the dozens of “chemical recycling” facilities proposed since the early 2000s, just three are operational, and **none are known to have successfully turned plastic into new plastic.**
- Much of what the industry calls “chemical recycling” or “advanced recycling” is actually plastic-to-fuel, or **turning plastic back into a fossil fuel to be burned.**
- A **lack of regulatory oversight** means that we have little information about the possible impacts of plastic-to-plastic facilities.

A BAD INVESTMENT THAT'S HARMFUL TO OUR HEALTH AND CLIMATE

- **Heavy investments are needed** to build a chemical recycling facility, procure and prepare the feedstock, manage toxic byproducts, and deal with technical failures. These high operating costs and the lack of concrete results make these projects a **risky investment.**
- As of 2017, similar technologies have **wasted at least \$2 billion of investments** with **canceled or failed projects across the globe.**
- “Chemical recycling” (aka plastic-to-fuel) is competing against, and **losing to, virgin plastic production.**
- What comes in must come out: **plastic can contain thousands of chemicals, including known toxins.** These toxic substances must go somewhere-- as **emissions, waste byproducts,** and in the resulting product. If these fuels and products have even been tested for toxicity, the results are not public.
- Plastic-to-fuel facilities place a **heavy toxic burden** on communities and workers at plastic waste processing sites, in the end use of the products they produce, and at the facilities where the waste created by the process is dumped, destroyed, or treated.
- **Over half of the plastic that is processed in these facilities comes out as climate pollution.** That's on top of the emissions from burning the resulting fuel.
- In one of the industry's most celebrated “chemical recycling” plants, Agilyx, **over 3x the amount of greenhouse gases are produced for each unit of product.**
- While industry claims that plastic-to-fuel lowers carbon footprint compared to conventional fossil fuels, such claims either lack independent verification or are based on arbitrary, partial life-cycle assessment models.

A DISTRACTION FROM REAL SOLUTIONS

- The climate and environment we all depend on are rapidly degrading -- **we don't have any more time to waste on greenwashing techno-fixes like “chemical recycling.”**
- “Chemical recycling” projects **should not receive public funds.**
- Decisionmakers should **reject “chemical recycling” project proposals** as well as legislation that enables further growth of the “chemical recycling” industry, particularly in environmental justice communities.
- Instead, **cities and states need to focus on what actually works: reducing the amount of plastic produced** and joining government leaders from around the world in **transitioning to zero waste systems.**

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- “Chemical Recycling: Distraction, Not Solution” [*Report & technical briefing*]
- “Questions and Answers: Chemical Recycling” [*Factsheet*]
- “US Legislation Alert: “Plastic-to-fuel” Bills” [*Factsheet*]
- zerowasteworld.org [*Website*]