

# VPIRG'S CAMPAIGN TO **STOP** SINGLE-USE **PLASTICS**

Vermont led the nation in 2019 by taking meaningful action to eliminate some of the most common forms of plastic pollution. This year, we have a chance to build on that thoughtful approach by taking a few key steps to combat the growing threat of single-use plastics. **Here are a set of top priorities for moving Vermont beyond plastics in 2020:**

## **1. Set a Goal to Cut Packaging Waste**

Vermont should establish a clear goal for cutting plastic packaging waste by 75% by 2030. This is the same numeric goal that has been proposed in California. Harmonizing with the world's sixth largest economy is sensible in this case and provides a roadmap for further action.

## **2. Ban the Use of Unnecessary Single-Use Products in the State**

While the restrictions on single-use plastics (straws, bags, polystyrene) enacted in Vermont last year were a great start, there are additional unnecessary products that are ripe for replaced by reusable alternatives. One key example is throwaway personal care products at hotels and other lodging establishments. Vermont should require most establishments to provide shampoo, conditioner, and lotion in bulk dispensers rather than single-use containers (those under 6 oz in size). Many leading hotel chains are already making this transition as part of their sustainability practices. The governor of California signed this into law in October 2019.

## **3. Modernize Vermont's Bottle Bill Recycling Program**

In cases where we cannot immediately eliminate plastic packaging waste, we should at least do more to promote a circular economy by increasing recycling and recycled content standards. It is time to update Vermont's successful Bottle Bill to include beverages like bottled water, wine, and hard cider, and increase the deposit from five to ten cents. Vermont should also require beverage manufacturers to use increasing quantities of recycled material in their single-use packaging in order to reduce the use of virgin material (like petroleum products) and create new markets for recycled materials. California and Maine have both introduced recycled content measures into their legislatures. The bill could also include language to encourage more commingling of containers at redemption centers.

## **4. Study Other Extender Producer Responsibility (EPR) Models for 2021 Session**

Finally, Vermont should set in motion a plan to consider additional EPR approaches as a complement to our existing Bottle Bill program. The goal is to encourage less waste and the use of less toxic materials by holding producers of single-use products responsible for the waste they generate. The Agency of Natural Resources could survey approaches in other states and jurisdictions (most specifically Maine, which is about a year ahead of us in this respect) to identify policy opportunities ahead of the 2021 legislative session.