

Packaging

We need to stop producing plastic. We have way too much already, but until we find a way to reuse it, we're caught in a consumption trap and we'll keep making more. This requires a redesign of how we package what we consume from the ground up. Almost all of our plastic consumption is packaging.

The main impediments to efficient sustainable plastic recycle are the labels and way too many types. Removing the labels is a large part of the recycle process, and we don't get it all, so it can only be recycled a few times before it's too degraded. Make the label from the same plastic as the container or print the label directly on the container, so any contamination will only be residual contents and the ink. Only the most common types of plastic have an economy of scale that makes them economically and environmentally recyclable. We need to abandon a lot of different less used types.

Except for the labels and the fuel it takes to make the glass, glass is relatively nontoxic. Were it not for the labels, glass makes the best concrete aggregate. Even when we get most of the labels out when it's crushed, they're still a bunch of pollution to deal with that ends up in the landfill. Here in the US, nobody buys just one beer. Put the label on the carton, and emboss the company logo on the bottle at the glass factory like they did in times past. Better yet, buy your beverages and booze in aluminum cans that can be endlessly recycled. Because of the difference in weight, it takes a lot more fossil fuel to haul a product in glass instead of aluminum. Better yet, don't buy the stuff in the first place. Most of it is just unhealthy booze and tongue toys.