



PETER WILLIAMS

OBJECT

Submission ID: 213743

Organisation: N/A	Key issues: Social impacts, Visual impacts, design and landscaping, Land use compatibility (surrounding land uses), Traffic
Location: New South Wales 2576	
Attachment: N/A	

Submission date: 11/14/2024 9:01:20 AM

Greenpeace found a couple facilities are trying to reprocess cups and containers sometimes called "number 5s" because of the markings on the containers. But the numbers are low. While 52% of recycling facilities in the U.S. accept that kind of plastic, the report found less than 5% of it is actually repurposed and the rest is put into a landfill. An NPR investigative report found in 2020 that industry officials misled the public about the recyclability of plastic even though their own reports showed they knew as early as the 1970s and 1980s that plastic could not be economically recycled. One paper estimated that the average person consumes five grams of plastic every week mostly from water. About 95% of the tap water in the United States is contaminated. Microplastics are also widely found in beer, salt, shellfish, and other human foods. Significant quantities of these plastic bits have turned up in common fruits and vegetables, as one recent study in Italy found. Manufacturing plants are concentrated in communities of color such as in Louisiana, in an area along the Mississippi River often called Cancer Alley, which is home to nearly 150 oil refineries, plastics plants, and chemical facilities. Such plants emit air pollution that raises risks of cancer and other diseases. Recent research has shown that chemical recycling is worse for the environment than mechanical recycling in terms of greenhouse gas emissions and water use, and in some cases, worse than virgin plastic production. Pyrolysis has significant environmental impacts. Plants that use it require large amounts of energy to operate: Uekert found that recycling a kilogram of high-density polyethylene plastic using pyrolysis requires nearly seven times the amount of energy needed to make a kilogram of virgin plastic. Typically, that energy comes from burning fossil fuels, which creates air pollution and planet-heating carbon emissions, these processes, far from offering a solution, can create as much as 100 times more damaging environmental and climate impacts than virgin plastic production, which seriously calls into question the efficiency and environmental benefit of chemical recycling. An estimated 242 million metric tons plastic waste it is generated globally every year, polluting our cities and clogging the oceans, and the United States is one of the top generators. However, America recycles only about 8.7 percent of its plastic waste. The other 90 percent or so is incinerated or landfilled or ends up in the environment. As public concern grows about mountains of plastic trash, the plastics industry is promoting technologies that it misleadingly calls chemical recycling (also known as advanced recycling, molecular recycling, and chemical conversion) and touts as a solution to the plastic crisis. But it is a false solution. In fact, based on our analysis of eight chemical recycling plants in the United States, we found that (1) most chemical recycling facilities in the United States are not recycling any plastic, (2) chemical recycling facilities generate hazardous air pollutants and large quantities of hazardous waste, and (3) chemical recycling facilities tend to be located in communities that are disproportionately low income, people of color, or both.

Chemical recycling will not solve our plastic waste problem. Instead, we need policies that reduce plastic production and waste, promote greater transparency about chemical recycling, ensure the protection of environmental justice communities that are disproportionately impacted by these facilities, and do not greenwash the plastic-to-fuel processes as recycling.