



# Chasing Arrows: The Truth About Recycling

## – Community Watch Party Toolkit

Thank you so much for your interest in hosting a Chasing Arrows: The Truth About Recycling watch party! As we face increasingly alarming plastic pollution and climate crises, it is more important than ever to come together to support solutions to protect our natural resources and the people who rely on them.

Our film, [Chasing Arrows: The Truth About Recycling](#), produced in partnership with the Emmy Award-winning [Peak Plastic Foundation](#), outlines how plastics are overwhelming, overtaxing, and contaminating the recycling system, and outlines authentic solutions to improving recycling and reducing plastic pollution.

If you have any additional questions or comments, please reach out to us at [contact@ambr-recyclers.org](mailto:contact@ambr-recyclers.org).

### Suggested Timeline and Steps

Ready to host a watch party for your community to learn about authentic recycling and proven solutions to reducing plastic pollution? Here's our suggested timeline:

6-8 weeks prior:

1. **Confirm the watch party** First, email AMBR at [contact@ambr-recyclers.org](mailto:contact@ambr-recyclers.org) to let us know you'd like to host a watch party. Let us know the date, location, and expected attendance. This allows us to grant you permission to screen the film and keep track of the number of community events hosted.



6 weeks prior:

2. **Get ready to share the event.** Check out our [graphics library](#) below, which includes a film preview, digital and print flyers, social media graphics and posts, and website/blog graphics. You can add your logo to the media using Canva and edit the event date, time, and location.

4-6 weeks prior:

3. **Publicize the event.** Have your material ready? Great! Now you can share the event with your friends, community members, and elected officials. Here are a few ideas for how to share:
  - a. Post the event on your social media pages and ask attendees to share the post. Most social media platforms allow you to schedule posts and plan ahead.
  - b. Post to local event calendars in your community.
  - c. Share directly by email, text, or phone call with block clubs, elected officials, non-profit organizations, community groups, religious institutions, clubs, etc.
  - d. Post flyers in community spaces like libraries, laundromats, grocery stores, coffee shops, transportation hubs like bus stations and metro stops, and other places where people hang out.

**Helpful tips:**

- If you ask people to RSVP via a registration page or other method, you'll know how many people to expect, which is helpful for planning the event. You will also have their contact information should you want to follow up after the event.
- Asking trusted community members to share the event will help increase participation.



One or two weeks prior:

**4. Structure your event.** Below is a suggested event agenda – but please structure this to meet your needs.

**Agenda:**

- Welcome & introductions
- A quick introduction to the plastic pollution crisis – you should tailor this to your community and region, but we've included a few talking points below to get you started.
- Film screening
- Post-film discussion (see below)
- Brainstorm how to take action in your community
- Determine your next steps

**Key messages on the plastic pollution crisis:**

Reduce, reuse, *then* recycle: This was where recycling was intended to fit within the circular economy hierarchy. Instead, recycling has become the scapegoat for unchecked plastic packaging production.

We will never recycle our way out of the plastic pollution crisis. We must reduce our use of plastics, starting with the most problematic and unnecessary, we must design products for reuse instead of single-use disposability, and THEN we must employ authentic recycling. With support, regulation, and investments, we can evolve the recycling system, a vital part of a Zero Waste society.

Luckily, there are proven solutions to keep natural resources like fossil fuels in the ground in the first place, like producer responsibility, deposit-return systems, truth in labeling, minimum recycled content, and subsidizing reuse and recycling, not the extraction of fossil fuels.



We'll talk about these policies after the film, and what we can do together to reduce plastic pollution.

Day of:

## **5. Host the event!**

The big day is here! It's time to host the event. We've included frequently asked and suggested discussion questions, but please feel free to create your own.

If you'd like to send us a picture of your hosting party, we will post it to our social media.

Before the event:

- Make a list of everything you will need and prepare a brief run of show.
- Check your audio and visual equipment before the event (for both in-person and virtual) and run a test to ensure everything works properly.
- For large virtual events, assigning a technology point-person to manage glitches is helpful, as well as a chat/question manager.
- If you anticipate large attendance, consider using breakout groups following the film screening for discussion.

## **Post-Film Discussion Questions**

The film outlines a number of policy solutions to improve recycling and reduce plastic pollution. This includes bottle deposit systems, extended producer responsibility, truth in labeling, minimum recycled content, and shifting public funding from fossil fuel extraction towards reuse, refill, and recycling solutions. We hope the below questions will foster a productive discussion on the role of recycling in reducing plastic pollution. (If you need more information on the outlined solutions, visit [ambr-recyclers.org](http://ambr-recyclers.org).)



1. What's something new you learned from the film that you didn't know?
2. What role does each actor (consumer, producer, recycling operator, elected officials/governments) have in reducing plastic pollution and improving recycling? For example, should manufacturers/producers create packaging and containers that are more recyclable or reusable, or should recyclers try to accommodate all the packaging produced by the industry? Who should be responsible for paying for these transitions?
3. Which of the policies suggested in the film do you think would best address the recycling challenges and plastic pollution concerns in your community or state?
4. What do you think the barriers would be to passing such a law?
5. What action(s) are you inspired to take after seeing this film?

## Frequently Asked Questions

Following the film's release, we've received a lot of questions about recycling. Here are some of the most frequently asked questions and answers.

### **Is my item (clamshell, carton, cup, umbrella, etc.) recyclable?**

Unfortunately, there are only a few materials we can say declaratively you can recycle regardless of where you live. This is because all recycling is local. What materials can be accepted depends on end markets (who is buying the material), the value of the material, the ability to sort the material in a recycling facility (whether the technology exists locally), and whether it can be collected at a higher volume.

### **Is recycling worth it?**

Absolutely. Recycling is an important part of a circular economy that includes reducing, reusing, product redesign and producer responsibility. Recycling is critical to protecting our climate and our natural resources, and to keeping natural resources we've already extracted in circulation so we can prevent further extraction, energy use, and greenhouse gas emissions.



**What are some common greenwashing tactics used by companies within the recycling industry? How can consumers identify and differentiate between genuine sustainability efforts and greenwashing in the products or services they encounter?**

Unfortunately, currently, it is difficult for consumers to identify and differentiate between genuine sustainability efforts and greenwashing tactics. That's why we need truth-in-labeling policies to increase transparency.

**Why do groups working to address plastic pollution focus less on individual efforts in recycling and more on advocating for major government and corporate change?**

We need both. We will not get the change we need without changing the system, so we focus on leveraging change through policy that will reduce plastic use and resource use at the design stage. Individual action is great in that it underscores the message that the "consumer" wants better choices and a better system; they don't want to always have to educate themselves and work against the norm. So keep recycling, and keep reaching out to your elected officials.

**How do we phase out single-use plastics?**

First and foremost, we must eliminate the most problematic plastics, #3 (PVC), #6 (polystyrene, often called Styrofoam), and #7 (catch all for miscellaneous plastics blends), and black plastic. These plastics are harmful to communities in their production, use, and disposal, and very difficult to recycle.

Second, we must bolster reduction strategies above all else, and invest in reuse and refill options wherever possible. State and national governments must pass strong legislation to ensure systemic solutions, not band-aids, that truly create a bridge toward a more just and sustainable economy.



## Design Library

- Chasing Arrows: [YouTube Link](#)
- Chasing Arrows: Film Trailer ([download](#))
- [Event Flier](#) – editable in Canva
- [Horizontal social media graphic](#)– editable in Canva
- [Square social media graphic](#) – editable in Canva



## Definition List:

**Bottle Deposit System or Contain Deposit Law:** This system applies a minimum refundable deposit (5 or 10 cents) on beverage containers, ensuring a high rate of recycling or reuse. Ten U.S. states have bottle deposit systems.

**Chemical or Advanced Recycling:** This is an umbrella term for various technologies that chemically convert plastic waste to fuel or new plastic. Learn more about the complexities of this technology in our [report](#).

**Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging and Paper:** EPR policies for packaging and paper require product manufacturers to pay for the costs to take back, recycle, or properly dispose of their products and packaging. EPR reduces unnecessary packaging, supports scaling up reuse systems, improves and increases recycling, ensures equitable and convenient access to recycling, and helps drive more sustainable product design.

**Minimum Content Requirements:** Requires producers to use more recycled content across all packaging types to improve the economics of recycling and reduce the carbon footprint of products.

**Pay-As-You-Throw:** This is a policy that charges people for the amount of trash they toss out. Many cities and towns around the world, including over 7,000 in the U.S., have pay-as-you-throw waste policies.

**Truth-in-Labeling:** These are laws protecting consumers from misleading and untrue environmental marketing claims to promote and sell products. Inaccurate information can compel consumers to buy more expensive products and packaging that seem better for the environment but are in reality, routinely landfilled or, worse, littered.