

Environment & Energy

New York State Seeks to Reduce Electronic, Foam Packaging Waste

By Zach Bright

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New York's environmental conservation department adopted regulations to limit electronic waste and clear up details for a foam packaging ban, the agency announced Thursday.

Its new e-waste measure—taking effect in January 2023—will increase consumer recycling opportunities, improve e-waste collection, and emphasize producer responsibility, the department's statement said. Another regulation included clarifications to a recently enacted ban on polystyrene foam, a non-biodegradable substance.

1. Details of the ban on foam containers and packing peanuts include prohibitions for their sale, a financial hardship waiver process, and cost comparison analyses for alternatives.
2. "New York was among the first states to ban foam take-out containers and packing peanuts," Environmental Conservation Commissioner Basil Seggos said in the statement, "because we've seen the direct impacts of litter in neighborhoods across the state and the ongoing, long-term damage created by microplastics on our environment."
3. The two measures build upon New York's ban on plastic carryout bags, bottle bill, and food waste prevention and scrap recycling efforts, the statement said.
4. It also follows the state's 2020 ban on per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances—"forever chemicals" known as PFAS—in food packaging, which set to start in January 2023.

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