



# ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATIVE NEWS

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## **AVOID WISH-CYCLING** **putting things in your recycling cart that don't belong**



Kingston, NY – Ulster County Legislative Chairwoman Tracey Bartels and Legislator Laura Petit, Chairwoman of the Recycling Oversight Committee want to encourage Ulster County residents to re-educate themselves about recycling and recommit to reduce, reuse and recycle.

“Wish-cycling is the practice of putting questionable items in the recycling container in the hopes that they will ultimately be recycled. The tragic irony is that due to strict regulations, wish-cycling can ultimately contaminate otherwise marketable recyclables resulting in increased waste. In this case, well-meaning actions actually have the opposite effect,” Bartels explained.

The problem, according to Bartels, is exacerbated by variations in the materials being accepted and methods of recycling utilized from hauler to hauler.

“Our goal is to standardize how and what we recycle but for now people can check with their local hauler or at their town recycling center regarding what items they accept. Items like plastic bags, Styrofoam, garden hose, ceramics and window glass should never be in with recycling. When in doubt, ask!” said Petit.

Petit noted that people often transport their recycling in a plastic garbage bag, but warned that no plastic bags should ever be placed in with the recycling. Plastic bags jam up the machinery and add to the cost of recycling. Instead, she suggested that after emptying the recycling out into the appropriate bin, they could reuse the plastic bag for trash.

“Better yet, get reusable carts or totes and don't use plastic bags at all,” suggested Petit.

The Ulster County Legislature's Recycling Oversight Committee plans to partner with the Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency's newly appointed Recycling Educator, Melinda France, and Recycling Coordinator, Angelina Peone, to develop informational materials for the public and private sector about how and what we recycle but they hope to do more.

“Education will be key to a successful recycling program. Following Ulster County's Source Separation and Recycling law and working with local haulers will enable us to present a unified and uniform instruction sheet to anyone generating waste. We need to encourage waste reduction and diversion as well through modified consumerism. Otherwise we are not following the basic statement in the solid waste management plan for maximization of recycling that set a goal of 40% in twenty years.” said Petit, “We have to move forward together with positive goals to get this done.”

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