

PLASTIC LAW DELAYS

Sir, Across the world the Covid-19 pandemic is being used as a cover story to block urgently needed legislation on plastic to protect people and the planet. Last month the Plastics Industry Association asked Alex Azar, the US secretary of health, to reverse the plastic bag bans passed by states including New York and California. The industry group alleged that single-use plastics represented the 'safest choice' during a virus outbreak. This is contrary to a wealth of evidence supporting the plastic bag bans. In March a study published in the New England Journal of Medicine revealed that Covid-19 could remain infectious on plastic for some or three days, compared with a day or less on cardboard, cloth or wood. In addition, a growing body of evidence raises serious concerns about plastic and its links to ill health. Research published in the Netherlands last year revealed that human contact with microplastics may compromise the human immune system.

Corporate lobbyists are using anxiety about Covid-19 to promote their business agenda. Ceding to their demand's risks prolonging the exposure of some of the world's most vulnerable people to the effects of crises such as climate change and plastic pollution.

Professor Sascha Hooker, School of Biology; University of St Andrews; Dr Susan Shaw, Founder & Executive Director, Shaw Institute; Sian Sutherland, Cofounder, A Plastic Planet; Maria Westerbos, Founder, Plastic Soup Foundation; Dr Mark G Hartl, Associate Marine Professor, Heriot-Watt University; Alistair Lyndon, Associate Marine Professor, Heriot-Watt University; Liz Bonnin, Science, Natural History and Environmental broadcaster; Dr. Ognjen Markovic, Chief Strategy Officer, Surfing Medicine International; Dr Ohver Bragg, Research Fellow, Geography and Environmental Science, University of Dundee; David Azoulay; Environmental Health Program Director, Centre for International Environmental Law; Professor Julia Stegemann, Professor of Environmental Engineering, University College London; Professor Huw Davies, School of Management, University of St Andrews; Baroness Lister of Burtersett, Professor of Social Policy, Loughborough University; Lord Hayward, Crossbench Peer, Baroness Jolly, Liberal Democrat Peer; Lord Loomba CBE Crossbench Peer; Lord Alton of Liverpool, Crossbench Peer; Lord Browne of Ladyton, Labour Peer; Lord Shipley, Liberal Democrat Peer; Baroness Meacher; Crossbench Peer; Lord Stunell, Liberal Democrat Peer