In 1970, my family made a commitment that set us on the road to zero waste.

“We will not buy anything that we are unwilling to take Responsibility for”

Disposal is not an option

(Shifts consequences to someone else)
Suddenly, consumer goods are seen in an entirely different light.

- How easily can the product be reused, refilled, or repaired?
- At the end of its life, how easily can the product be recycled?

Suddenly, “convenience” takes on an entirely different meaning.
Product Policies

“Products and services put into commerce should be designed to make the return of discarded products for reuse, refill, repair, and at the end of its life, recycle, as easy as purchasing new products.”*

* from Sierra Club Zero Waste Policy
A wide variety of product policies can be adopted to make these shifts, including:

- promotion of durability and reuse/repurpose
- right to repair legislation
- refill systems
- minimum recycled content requirements
- certification programs
- deposit return systems*

*The Sierra Club specifically supports state and national bottle bills as a vital strategy to increase the collection and reclamation of clean materials for recycling into new materials.
“Toxic (or problem) materials used in products and packaging and produced as byproducts in production processes should be minimized and phased out”*

Strategies include:

- Promotion of alternatives (green chemistry programs)
- Bans

* from Sierra Club Zero Waste Policy
https://www.epa.gov/greenchemistry#:~:text=Green%20chemistry%20is%20the%20design,innovation%20and%20a%20strengthened%20economy.
Extended Producer Responsibility

“Producer responsibility (or “product stewardship”) means whoever designs or produces a product takes responsibility for minimizing the product's environmental and social impacts throughout all stages of the products life cycle.”*

Strategy to engage the producers of products and to make them part of the solution rather than part of the problem.

* from Sierra Club Zero Waste Policy
Extended Producer Responsibility
“Fiscal responsibility, but not necessarily physical responsibility”

“Devil is in the Details”
Extended Producer Responsibility
“Fiscal responsibility, but not necessarily physical responsibility”
Things that every EPR Legislation (national or state) should reflect:
• Involvement of local recyclers (private and/or municipalities)
• An independent Product Stewardship Board (PSB)
• Eco-modulated fees (proportional to the cost of material recovery)
• Targeted materials, products and packaging are not to be incinerated or landfilled
• EPR programs are not to interfere with Beverage Container programs
• EPR programs are not to be exclusive monopolies
• Does not preclude bans, minimum recycled content requirements, etc.
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Proceed with Caution

“Fiscal responsibility, but not necessarily physical responsibility”
Extended Producer Responsibility

“Company should not make anything that it is unwilling to take Responsibility for.”

Rephrasing our personal commitment:
“We will not buy anything that we are unwilling to take Responsibility for.”