Why does the Clark County Waste Management District only accept plastics #1 and #2?

The terms "plastic #1" and "plastic #2" refer to a plastic container's resin identification code. Put simply, this code refers to what type of polymer comprises a container (and not all plastics are created equal).

Consumers can quickly identify which type of plastic a container is made from by checking for the recycling symbol ( ) on the container, usually on the bottom or on a side label. Inside the symbol will be a number, 1-7, which is the resin code.

As with other materials in the recycling industry, acceptability of plastics into a recycling program is largely determined by market forces. #1 and #2 plastics are accepted into nearly every drop-off and curb-side recycling program because there is strong post-consumer demand for them from manufacturers. Though plastics #3 through #7 are actually recyclable, there is not a strong market for them in the central Ohio region. The material recovery facility (MRF) where materials collected by the CCWMD are taken accepts only #1 and #2 plastics.

Many common household containers offered for recycling are comprised of #1 and #2 plastics, including soda and water bottles, milk jugs, laundry detergent bottles, salad dressing containers, shampoo and soap bottles, and many more.

The type of plastic (denoted by its resin code) often determines what type of products it can be used to manufacture. See chart below.

Symbol	Code	Description	Examples
01 PET	#1 PET(E)	Polyethylene terephthalate	Soda & water bottles, salad dressing bottles
02 PE-HD	#2 PEHD or HDPE	High-density polyethylene	Milk jugs, shampoo & conditioner bottles
03 PVC	#3 PVC	Polyvinyl chloride	Window frames, bottles for chemicals, flooring
04 PE-LD	#4 PELD or LDPE	Low-density polyethylene	Plastic bags, buckets, soap dispenser bottles, plastic tubes
05 PP	#5 PP	Polypropylene	Bumpers, car interior trim, industrial fibers, yogurt tubs
06 PS	#6 PS	Polystyrene	Toys, flower pots,, ashtrays, trunks, "Styrofoam"
07 O	#7 O(ther)	All other plastics	Bio-based plastics