



PLASTICS

Americans are generating more plastic trash than ever. More than **1,000,000 plastic bottles are sold each day** and in the United States, **only about 23% of those bottles are recycled.**



Of all the single-use plastics bought annually **32% - about 25 million tons - winds up our oceans** which is the same as pouring a garbage truck of plastic into the ocean every minute. This rate is expected to **increase to 2 trucks per minute by 2030.** This is just a snapshot of the issue.



The lifecycle of plastics begins with the **extraction of fossil fuels** which results in excess rock and soil being dumped into adjacent streams and valleys. Unconventional extraction methods such as natural gas hydraulic fracturing or 'fracking' **leads to methane and toxic aerosol emissions, resource depletion, and harmful wastewater contamination.**



After extraction, the raw material is shipped to a cracking plant where ethane and propane are broken down into ethylene and propylene. Ethylene and Propylene are then processed in different ways with chemical additives to make pre-production plastic pellets called 'nurdles.' The plastic nurdles are then molded into the different plastic products we use - from plastic shopping bags to children's action figures.

Besides the environmental impacts of pollution from plastic production, **plastics are forever.** When plastics are thrown into landfills it photo-degrades breaking down into smaller plastic bits. **Microplastics** (anything smaller than five millimeters in length) also come from microbeads which are very tiny pieces of manufactured polyethylene plastic that are added as exfoliants to health and beauty products, cleansers and toothpastes. These microplastics end up in in our they **end up in our drinking water, in our foods and in our air.** These micro and nano-plastics once in the body enter the circulatory system and accumulates in our organs.



Want to start a plastic bag ban in your community?

Write to local businesses you support.

Sample Letter to Business Owners

Dear _____,

As one of your regular customers, I am writing to ask you to change your policies regarding single-use plastic bags. Please join in with other retailers either by 1) offering a credit per bag for customers who bring their own and/or 2) introducing a small fee on single-use, plastic bags. You'll both save money and make your business more environmentally responsible!

In the 40 years since their creation single-use plastic bags have become an environmental hazard. It is estimated that the average American family takes home 1500 plastic bags per year. These bags often wind up in waterways or floating around our parks and streets, degrading water and soil as they break down into tiny toxic microplastics. Their manufacture, transportation and disposal use large quantities of non-renewable resources, release large amounts of global warming gases and take over 500 years to degrade if put into a landfill. Not to mention the hundreds of thousands of marine animals that die every year when they mistake plastic bags for food.

It doesn't have to be this way and you can help make a difference! Charging for disposable bags and rewarding the use of reusable bags works. Would you please consider saving our environment and making our community more sustainable by reducing the use of single-use plastics? I am happy to help you start the process.

Sincerely,