



Social Justice Committee

STEWARDS OF OUR EARTH *All of God's Creation*

Plastic Pollution: A Harmful Waste that We Must Address

“Every year, the U.S. generates 42 million metric tons of plastic pollution -- the equivalent of 286 pounds of waste per person in America. This total is greater than the plastic pollution from the entire European Union.” (Oliver Milman, *The Guardian*, December 1, 2021)

“Plastic production fuels the climate crisis and damages communities with toxic air and water pollution. Once discarded, plastic clogs our rivers and oceans, harms wildlife, infiltrates our drinking water, and persists in the environment for centuries. Plastic is a threat to human health, exposing us to chemicals linked to many of the known public health crises of our time, including obesity, attention deficit disorder, and many forms of cancer.

But there's still time to make the big changes we need.

The U.S. federal government is the single largest consumer in the world and can leverage its purchasing power to catalyze a sustainable marketplace. Its spending strategy can act as a market leader, driving change across entire industries. It has the power to significantly reduce the production of plastic and its disposal in landfills and incinerators and spur demand for better alternatives.” [Urge the General Services Administration, the procurement arm of the government, to prohibit federal agencies from buying single-use plastic products.](#) (*Center for Biological Diversity*, April 15, 2022)

Another important change that is both necessary and possible is the **Break Free from Plastic Pollution Act**. “If passed, it will ban many of the worst single-use plastics, including plastic carryout bags and polystyrene foam take-out containers. It also places a moratorium on new plastic-producing facilities.” [Call on your representative to support the Break Free from Plastic Pollution Act today.](#) (*Environmental Action*, April 12, 2022)

“One single plastic bag takes 1,000 years to degrade in a landfill. And across the country, plastic production and consumption has gone up every year since the 1960s -- a trend that could lead to plastic outnumbering fish in the sea by 2050” (*Environment America*, April 8, 2022). There are already an estimated 150 million metric tons of plastic in our oceans. **“Nothing we use for a few minutes should be able to threaten our health and environment”** (*Environment America*, April 11, 2022).

“After a pandemic-induced delay, **Philadelphia’s ban on single-use plastic bags** is now in full effect, enforcement and all.... Businesses that continue using plastic bags may be fined, with a minimum penalty of \$150. Repeat offenders may be taken to court by the city.... Officials point to the volume of bags the city uses — an estimated 1 billion per year — and the role they play in littering streets and waterways. The city also estimates it has wasted about 10,000 hours at recycling facilities retrieving bags, which are not recyclable but often end up mixed with recyclables and untangling them from equipment.” (Maria Pulcinella, WHYY, April 1, 2022)

A Green Tip from *World Wildlife Fund Heroes* (4/22/22) that You Can Take Today

Skip unnecessary single-use plastics such as non-reusable water bottles, plastic bags, and straws. Consider what items are truly necessary and which you can do without.