



Overview

Plastic pollution is infiltrating waterways worldwide, accumulating as toxic debris in marine life, and ultimately harming the humans who consume seafood. Single-use plastics, such as bottles, straws, and utensils, are the most pervasive plastic pollutants and slowly break down into smaller particles that stay in the environment. Recycling alone is not enough to meet these threats as plastic is predominantly made from fossil fuels and production is expected to increase by [more than 30%](#) over the next decade.

Legislation

Numerous states have introduced strong bills to curb single-use plastics through actions like banning products altogether, establishing study commissions, and improving recycling and end of life management.



Bans

One of the most direct and tangible legislative actions to reduce plastic pollution is by introducing bans on single-use plastic.

- **Plastic Bag Bans or Fees:** Six states have banned plastic bags. Strong bills include Oregon [HB 2509](#) and [Maine LD 1532](#) which ban single-use plastic bags and place a fee on single-use recycled paper bags and plastic reusable bags.
- **Polystyrene:** Maryland ([SB285/HB109](#)) and Maine ([LD289](#)) passed bills prohibiting polystyrene, with Maine including a ban on single-use stirrers as well. .
- **Comprehensive Single-Use Plastic Bans:** Some states are considering bans on all single-use, non-recyclable products. Vermont signed [S113](#) into law, prohibiting the distribution of single-use plastic carryout bags, polystyrene products, and plastic straws to customers.
- **Straws:** New Hampshire ([HB559](#)) and Illinois ([HB3379](#)) would require straws to only be provided upon request.



Extended Producer Responsibility and Waste Management

Extended producer responsibility legislation aims to hold producers responsible for the waste they create through establishing stewardship programs, and requiring all single-use products be made recyclable or compostable. Landmark examples include California's [AB1080](#), and Washington's [SB5397](#).



Commissions and Councils

Through convening councils and study commissions, states can gauge the severity of pollution and its effects, develop recommendations, and ultimately enact solutions. New Jersey's ([A4715](#)) establishes "Plastic Pollution Task Force" to study ways to reduce and address plastic pollution and make recommendations.



Bottles

States are working to regulate single-use plastic bottles through a number of creative measures. New York's "Right to Refill Act" ([A 8722](#)) clarifies state health code to allow customers to bring in their own reusable drink and food containers into food establishments. California [AB 792](#) would require 50% post-consumer recycled content in beverage containers. States are creating beverage container deposit systems, such as [Illinois HB 2651](#), or expanding upon existing deposit laws.