

Circular Economy

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National Strategy to Prevent Plastic Pollution

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National Strategy to Prevent Plastic Pollution: Part Three of a Series on Building a Circular Economy for All

The "National Strategy to Prevent Plastic Pollution: Part Three of a Series on Building a Circular Economy for All" provides an ambitious, equitable approach to reducing and recovering plastics and other materials, as well as preventing plastic pollution from harming human health and the environment.

For decades, EPA has worked to protect human health and the environment from air and water pollution and mismanagement of solid and hazardous waste created throughout the materials lifecycle. Congress recognized the need to take further action to address plastic pollution and passed the Save Our Seas 2.0 Act in December 2020. The Act directed EPA to develop a national strategy on plastic pollution. Together with EPA's "[National Recycling Strategy](#)" and the "[National Strategy for Reducing Food Loss and Waste and Recycling Organics](#)," the "National Strategy to Prevent Plastic Pollution" presents opportunities for voluntary and regulatory actions by:

- Businesses.
- Academia.
- Industry.
- Nongovernmental organizations.
- Federal, Tribal, state, local, and territorial governments.
- Consumers.

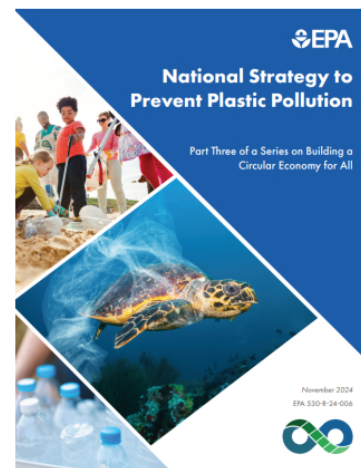
Together, these U.S. entities could eliminate the release of plastic waste from land and sea-based sources into the environment by 2040. These opportunities consist of interventions across the entire plastics lifecycle to reduce the U.S. contribution of plastic pollution into the environment. The final strategy reflects input from many interested parties – including public feedback from almost 92,000 comment letters from federal, Tribal, territorial, state, and local governments; industry and trade organizations; community and national nongovernmental organizations; academia and private individuals.

In the "National Strategy to Prevent Plastic Pollution," EPA recognizes the need to implement a circular economy approach for all. Communities with environmental justice concerns may experience disproportionate burdens from plastic production and waste management processes. That is why environmental justice is a central consideration in this strategy. Opportunities for action include assessing and reducing impacts—such as those from plastic production and waste management processes—on fenceline communities and implementing materials management strategies that are inclusive of communities with environmental justice concerns.

The "National Strategy to Prevent Plastic Pollution" has six main objectives that address plastic pollution throughout the lifecycle of plastic products:

- A.** Reduce Pollution from Plastic Production.
- B.** Innovate Material and Product Design.
- C.** Decrease Waste Generation.
- D.** Improve Waste Management.
- E.** Improve Capture and Removal of Plastic Pollution.
- F.** Minimize [Loadings](#) and Impacts to Waterways and the Ocean.

Each objective is followed by opportunities for action that support the United States' shift to a circular approach to materials management, which is restorative or regenerative by design, enables resources to maintain their highest value for as long as possible, and aims to eliminate waste in the management of plastic products.



- [National Strategy to Prevent Plastic Pollution \(pdf\)](#) (13.92 MB) .
- [Executive Summary](#).
- [Press Release](#).
- [Webinar Slides for National Strategy to Prevent Plastic Pollution \(pdf\)](#) (3.74 MB)

In July 2024, the White House released "[Mobilizing Federal Action on Plastic Pollution: Progress, Principles, and Priorities](#)" (pdf) ([1 KB](#)), [a](#) government-wide strategy with opportunities for federal agencies to target plastic pollution during production, processing, use, and disposal. EPA's "National Strategy to Prevent Plastic Pollution" is aligned with the White House strategy and expands the scope to actions in the United States that everyone can take.

Draft National Strategy to Prevent Plastic Pollution

In April 2023, EPA published the "Draft National Strategy to Prevent Plastic Pollution" for public comment. EPA received almost 92,000 comment letters from industry and trade organizations, national and community-based NGOs, academia, government agencies (e.g., federal, Tribal, state, and local) and private individuals.

During the public comment period, EPA asked the public to consider several key questions in the draft strategy when reviewing and commenting on it:

- Which actions are the most important and would have the greatest positive impact at the local, regional, national, and global levels? Consider:
 - Which actions can best protect human health and environmental quality?
 - Which actions are most important to address environmental justice and climate change?
 - What are the key steps and milestones necessary to successfully implement the actions in the draft strategy?
- What are the most important roles and/or actions for federal agencies to lead?
- Is your organization willing to lead an action or collaborate with others to implement the actions?
 - What factors would your organization consider when determining whether to lead an action?
- What are potential unintended consequences of the proposed actions that could impact communities considered overburdened or vulnerable, such as shifts in production or management methods?
- What key metrics and indicators should EPA use to measure progress in reducing plastic and other waste in waterways and oceans?
- What criteria should processes other than mechanical recycling meet to be considered "recycling activities" (e.g., "plastics-to-plastics outputs are 'recycling' if the output is a product that could again be recycled into another product or to extent that it can achieve viable feedstock for new plastic materials")? How should health and environmental impacts be considered in these criteria?
- Are there other actions that should be included in the Strategy?
 - Should EPA expand the scope of the strategy to include sea-based sources?
 - Should specific types of plastic products be targeted for reduction or reuse in this strategy?
- Do you have any additional information or recommendations for EPA regarding these or other proposed actions in the draft strategy?

The comment period closed on July 31, 2023. You can [visit the docket](#) [to](#) view the draft strategy, executive summary, submitted comments, and other public comment information.

Webinar about the Draft Strategy

EPA hosted a webinar on May 11, 2023 to provide an overview of the draft strategy.

- [Access the presentation slides from this webinar \(pdf\)](#) (5.4 MB).
- You can find a recording of the webinar [on EPA's YouTube Channel](#). [↗](#)

Last updated on November 26, 2024

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