

RISE ABOVE PLASTICS TOOLKIT

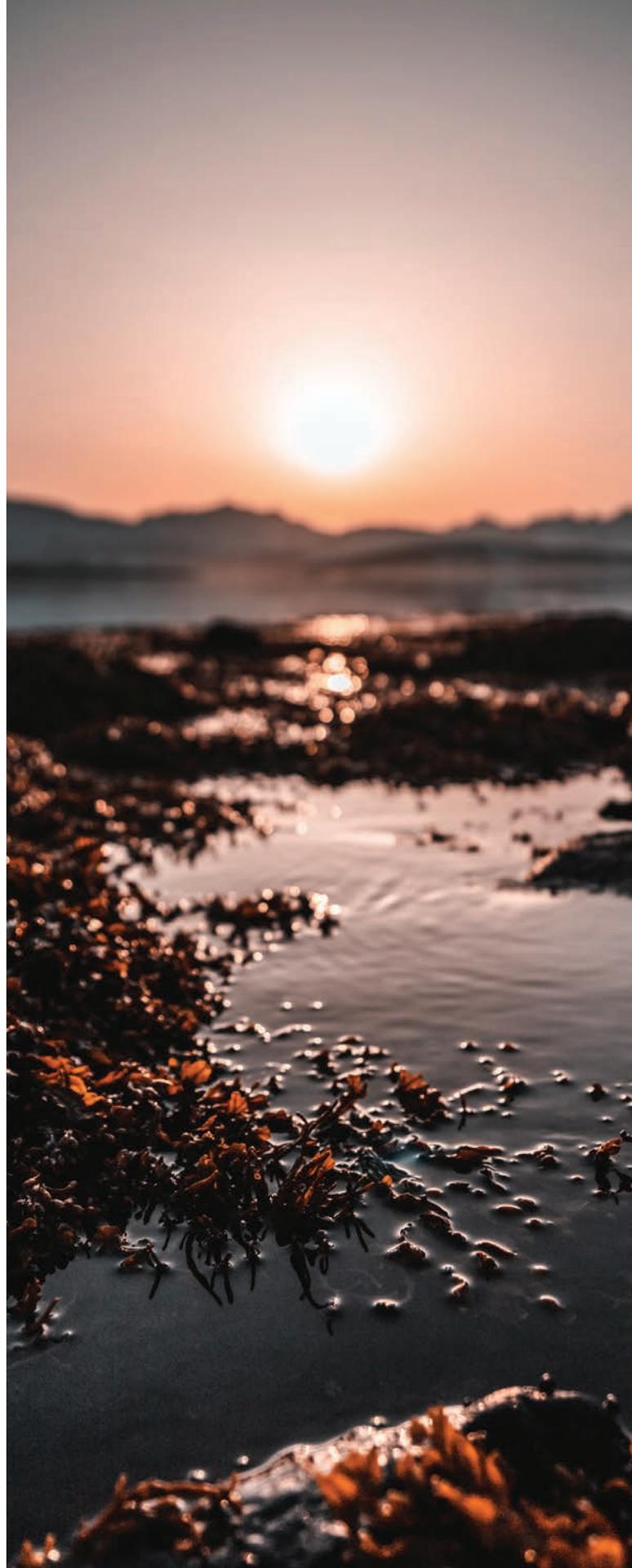
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INTRODUCTION

Surfrider Foundation is dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of the world's ocean, waves and beaches, for all people, through a powerful activist network.

Surfrider has built a network of coastal defenders who transform their passion for the coast into lasting protection. Bridging local knowledge together with national experts in law, policy and science, Surfrider is a leading voice on addressing plastic pollution. Our largest program, Rise Above Plastics, aims to reduce the impacts of plastics in the marine environment by raising awareness about the dangers of plastic pollution and by advocating for the elimination and reduction of unnecessary plastics.



WHY PLASTIC POLLUTION IS A GLOBAL CRISIS

Plastics are materials produced from fossil resources such as natural gas, and this material causes ecological harm throughout all levels of its life cycle, from manufacturing to disposal. Plastics do not biodegrade as they are a material derived from petrochemicals, and their improper disposal pollutes oceans, lakes and rivers. Plastic production also generates greenhouse gases, contributing to runaway climate change.

Every tonne of plastic produced generates 1.89 tonnes of greenhouse gases. Due to the amount of plastics lost to landfills, incinerators and ecosystems, we end up emitting 1.8 million metric tonnes of greenhouse gases every year in Canada to replace this lost material. As such, plastic has become one of the world's most persistent pollutants, adding fuel to the fires of ecological devastation, the sixth mass species extinction and climate change.

The environmental cost of plastic pollution is most commonly discussed, however, there are also innumerable social consequences caused by this crisis. We can understand all of these problems through a framework of environmental racism, which occurs when harmful conditions such as polluted air and unclean water disproportionately affect marginalized communities. From the frontline communities bordering plastic refineries to the millions of informal waste workers living in poverty who handle contaminated packaging, to the communities living near landfills and incinerators, to the streets and beaches burdened by plastic waste in developing nations and remote communities, these are all perpetuated by unnecessary and mismanaged plastic.

Considering the immense environmental and social consequences of plastic pollution, what can you do at home, at work, and in your community to create change on this issue? This Rise Above Plastic toolkit will give you a variety of options for sparking a surmountable difference.

CONDUCTING AN AT HOME PLASTIC AUDIT



Room to Room

Another effective avenue for eliminating unnecessary plastics is by conducting a plastic audit in your home. You can even dress for the occasion and get fancy with a clipboard, and then methodically move from room to room in your house! Visit the plastic alternatives annex in the back of the toolkit for a directory of common plastic items and their available replacements.



What's in your bin?

Perform a waste bin audit to see what you're sending to landfill. Think about all of the things you're able to eliminate or swap out for a recyclable or compostable alternative. Ensure you're also composting all biological waste.



What can you repair?

["Repair is better than recycling. Making our things last longer is both more efficient and more cost-effective than mining them for raw materials"](#) - Ellen Macarthur Foundation.

You can repair various things that will increase the zen of your space: leaky faucets, unstable chairs, household and garden equipment, dents or holes in walls, kitchen appliances, etc. You can visit ifixit.com which has repair guides for just about anything you can think of!



Do you own a vacation rental?

See our [Ocean Friendly Vacation Rental Toolkit](#) for more in depth information on how to make your rental as blue as can be.

SUPPORTING AN OCEAN FRIENDLY BUSINESS COMMUNITY

The Surfrider Pacific Rim Chapter runs the **Ocean Friendly Business (OFB)** Campaign, which supports businesses in eliminating plastics, diverting waste from landfill, keeping materials in use and implementing regenerative practices. In your community, you can work to shift the business culture to be more Ocean Friendly by:

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- ✓ **Supporting zero waste stores**, refilleries, bulk stores, and businesses with zero waste practices.
 - ✓ **Letting businesses know you do not need single-use plastics** (bags, straws, cutlery, containers, mugs, etc.) for the goods you purchase. **Encourage them to make the switch** to allow reusables and/or placing a fee on ecological alternatives to plastic packaging.
 - ✓ **Bring your own containers** for takeaway food and beverages.
 - ✓ **Ask businesses what they're doing** to lower their carbon footprint and **mitigate climate change**.
 - ✓ **Purchase gifts** for friends, family and coworkers from **Ocean Friendly businesses**.



- ✓ **Support** Ocean Friendly Business Practices by **sharing** them on your **social media** or **writing a positive online review!**

- ✓ **Do you work for a business?** Think about how they can make their practices more **Ocean Friendly**, see the **toolkit below!** You could also become the environment or sustainability lead for the business, reach out to Surfrider Pacific Rim for more information!

- ✓ Use the Surfrider **OFB Toolkit** and **share this with businesses in your community!**

WORKING TOWARDS ZERO WASTE SUPERMARKETS & GROCERY STORES

- ✓ **Urge your supermarket to ditch single-use plastics**, including plastic straws, cutlery, bags, takeaway containers and coffee cup lids. Urge community support by **starting a petition!**
- ✓ Encourage your supermarket to **source** and **sell sustainable** and **ethically made reusable** bags, produce bags, straws, containers, and bottles.
- ✓ Ask for a **bulk and refill section** if one isn't already in place where you can bring in your own containers.
- ✓ Put an end to deli based waste! **Bring in your own sanitized container** to your deli and ask them to fill this instead of a plastic container. Ask that your deli switches from plastic packaging like polystyrene to butcher paper.
- ✓ Now, what about the bread? In the bakery section, **bring in your own bread bag** and ask for this to be filled instead of a plastic or paper sleeve.
- ✓ **Send an email to owners of grocery stores** and **supermarkets**, along with **CEO's of bigger supermarket chains**, telling them to follow the advice of valued customers and make plastic packaging a relic of the past! See the appendix in the back of this toolkit for a letter template.
- ✓ Ask these stores to **eliminate** and **reduce plastic packaging on produce**, especially as this type of packaging is unnecessary! You can always leave this excess packaging at the store for them to see and deal with.
- ✓ **Tackle upstream waste!** Ask your grocery stores which suppliers send excessive plastic packaging and ask them to **request shipments without this erroneous material.**
- ✓ Inquire about getting **delivery models set-up**, where plastic free food is brought in **reusable totes** straight to people's homes.

ORGANIZING A COMMUNITY CLEANUP

Beach cleans are the keystone of our work; they not only **restore shorelines from pollution**, these activities also **provide data on the types of the debris washing up onto the beaches**. This data informs our campaigns and programs, which are working to tackle the root of the plastic pollution crisis, so that we can make clean ups obsolete!

You can use our [Love Your Beach Clean Guideline](#) to organize a community cleanup, and use the insights you gain to launch local plastic campaigns and initiatives. You can also do a **#5minutebeachclean** every time you take a sandy stroll, and use the [Marine Debris Tracker App](#) to log the data gathered from your collection. This will support **organizational efforts, including Surfrider Pacific Rim, in lobbying for action on plastics**.

WRITE TO POLLUTING INDUSTRIES IN YOUR AREA

Which industries operate where you live? Some of the greatest environmental victories have been grassroots, won on behalf of communities who were on the frontlines of pollution caused by industry, from toxic waste to mining. Working towards systemic change means shifting the way industries operate so that they are made responsible for the outcomes of their operations and practices.

FISHING & AQUACULTURE

Microfibers from synthetic fibers such as polyester, acrylic, and nylon are major sources of pollution and represent about 60% of clothing material worldwide. These man-made materials are chosen for their availability, durability and affordability. However, these products pollute microfibers to the environment at each stage in their lifecycle, from being manufactured to worn and washed.

When synthetic materials are washed they shed microfibers into wastewater that can not be filtered out through treatment plants. Each time we do a load of laundry an average of 9 million microfibers are released into wastewater systems that can not filter them out. The resulting microfibers end up in waterways where they attract organic material and enter the foodchain when consumed by animals. The plastic particles from microfibers contribute up to 35% of primary plastics polluting the world's oceans.

On the Pacific Rim, we know that a large portion of the marine debris we collect is coming from the fishing and aquaculture industry, who we're working with to implement new practices that reduce the amount of plastics being lost by their facilities.

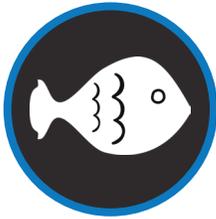
Find out if this industry is operating where you live and hold them accountable for clean-ups and proper management of equipment.

Oil and gas infrastructure

OIL & GAS

such as refineries, drilling sites, and pipelines are typically located in low-income communities and communities of color. The frontline communities that live directly alongside fossil fuel pollution and extraction are particularly vulnerable to the effects of the climate crisis. A report from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the Clean Air Task Force revealed that black people are 75% more likely to live in frontline communities, and face serious health risks such as cancer, asthma, and other respiratory diseases as the result of outputted pollutants from the fossil fuel industry.

WHICH INDUSTRIES OPERATE IN YOUR AREA THAT MAY BE CAUSING PLASTIC POLLUTION OR CONTRIBUTING TO PLASTIC WASTE IN LANDFILLS?



FISHING & AQUACULTURE



SHIPPING & TRANSPORT



TEXTILES



CONSTRUCTION



TOURISM & HOSPITALITY



FOOD & AGRICULTURE



OIL & GAS

[in which case, you're on the front-line of an industry responsible for extracting and manufacturing the raw materials for plastics.]

If you've identified a company under an industry that is causing plastic pollution, look to their website and find a contact - a sustainability manager or manager, to send your feedback to. You can also request to meet to discuss your concerns and provide recommendations. Let us know if you'd like our support in doing this, your voice matters and is instrumental in sparking change within industries.

ENACTING PLASTIC REGULATIONS

Lobbying is the process through which individuals and groups communicate their interests to federal, provincial or municipal governments in order to influence public policy or government decision-making. While there are many actions we can take as individuals, we also need to realize that not all individuals are in the position to achieve a zero-waste lifestyle. The cheapest food comes packaged in plastic, making it more accessible to marginalized populations. This issue is systemic in nature, and we need structural change in order to turn the tides on this crisis for all people.

There are multiple steps we can take as citizens to articulate our viewpoints with the government officials that serve us. First, you can write to or request to meet with your local Mayor and Council and inform them about why this issue matters to you. Surfrider's approach has always been to build voluntary compliance within the community first, work to get businesses on board in eliminating forms of single-use plastics and then requesting that the government enact regulations.

Look to create province or territorial change! Tell your local government that you want to see change at this level, which they can also support by writing letters with other municipalities. You can then communicate in a written or verbal format with your province or territory's Minister of Environment's office and/or your jurisdiction's Member of Parliament for discussing concerns at the level of the federal government. You can also take part in government-led environmental consultations and sign petitions that are targeting government bodies and calling for regulatory change.



SHIFTING TO A CIRCULAR ECONOMY AS A WAY TO ADDRESS PLASTIC POLLUTION

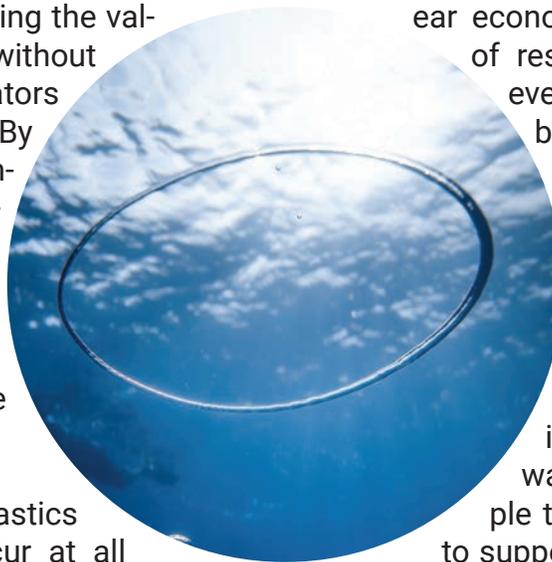
A circular economy is an economic system aimed at eliminating waste and keeping resources in use for as long as possible. As opposed to a traditional linear economic system whereby resources are extracted, used and disposed of (take, make, waste), a circular economy recovers and regenerates products and materials at their end of life to become part of a new cycle of use.

A circular economy is regenerative and restorative by design of a closed loop system. When it comes to plastics, a closed loop chain of resource use would mean keeping the value of plastic in the economy without losing it to landfill, incinerators or the natural environment. By transitioning to a circular economy, we are promoting a thriving economy that benefits the planet, producers, and consumers whereby materials are not wasted and are instead reused in a sustainable loop.

Policy change and enacting plastics regulations will need to occur at all levels of government to transition to a more efficient and regenerative economy. The majority of waste policy falls within provincial jurisdiction but can be influenced and made more efficient by the federal government. To continue forging the path to a circular economy, the federal and provincial governments must work together towards a collaborative approach that identifies uniform definitions, standards, targets and protocols to be carried out at each governing level.

Regulations to support this include: assigning property responsibility for end of life plastic to producer and creating extended producer responsibility, creating a requirement for a percentage of recycled content in plastic products, implementing uniform definitions, performance standards and assessment protocols, and introducing bans and prohibitions that include single use items to divert waste from entering landfill.

In order to support the just transition from a linear economic model to a circular loop of resource consumption and use, everyone from individuals, to businesses and governments will need to work together to evolve from our current wasteful model. As individuals, this practice starts with engaging the consumer self and taking steps in daily life to cut down on single-use items and take steps towards waste-free living. Steps for people to take in their day-to-day lives to support and uphold a circular economy include reusing, upcycling, and repairing items to keep resources already available in use. This models a sustainable way to live and aligns values with actions, and by becoming engaged citizens we are able to make transformative systemic change. Ways to advocate include leading waste-based campaigns, writing letters to all levels of government, organizing petitions, organizing awareness-raising events. Contact your local Surfrider Chapter to learn more and get involved in driving large scale change!



ENGAGING YOUTH



Plastics have become one of the most persistent pollutants in the environment, which is shaping the lives of youth today, and will continue to impact their futures. Empower and educate youth to take systemic action on plastics using our Youth Environmental Stewardship curriculum booklet. You can also refer to and use our Teacher's Guideline for implementing this curriculum at your school.

Lift up the young ones in your life! Take them on a cleanup, support them with an environmental project or campaign, discuss environmental issues with them, listen to their ideas, and provide mentorship that will support their growth. This can include supporting youth in leading campaigns and other initiatives that are addressing plastic waste, including running waste free lunch programs at school and eliminating single-use plastics in school.

Support youth in making lifestyle changes to make a difference! Lead the plastic home audit with a youth in your life and identify which ecological alternatives can replace common plastic products and packaging.

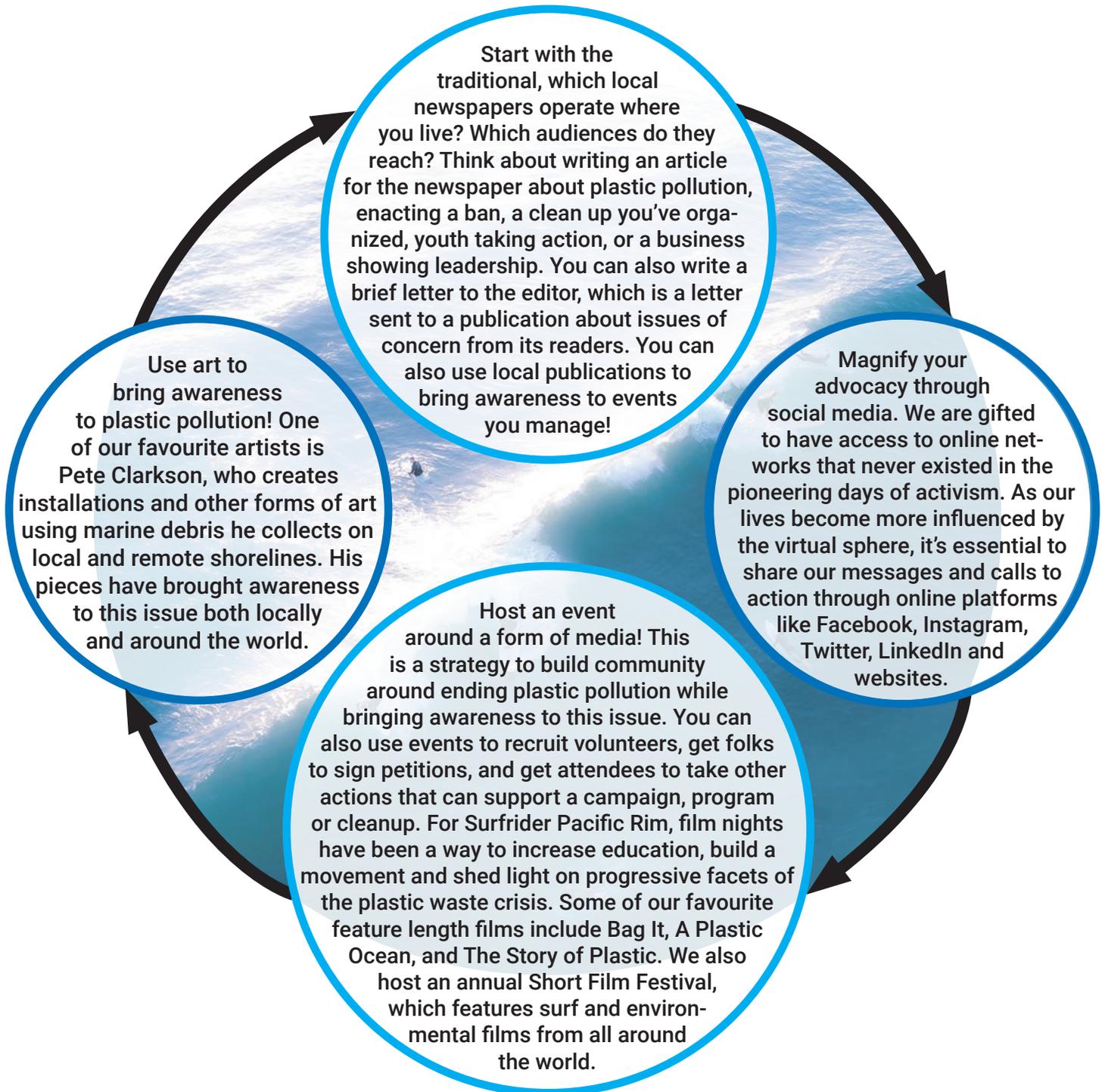
Support youth led organizations and rallies like **#FridaysforFuture**, stand behind the youth and prop up their voices and actions!

Have students advocate for legislation, which they can do by working with organizations like Surfrider Foundation. They can write letters to legislators, as well as do delegations on environmental issues and solutions to political leaders.

Assist youth in leading all other activities outlined in this toolkit, from amplifying messages through the media to writing letters to polluting companies!

AMPLIFY YOUR MESSAGE

Like a megaphone at a rally, we can use forms of media to amplify our messages and the actions we take.



**The more people we can reach,
the more impact we can have.**

BIOPLASTICS

Although the biodegradability of bioplastics appears to be a solution to traditional plastic, most need high temperature industrial composting facilities to break down. Unfortunately, at this point in time very few cities have the infrastructure in place to properly break down bioplastics at the end of their life cycle. As a result, bioplastics often end up in landfills where, deprived of oxygen, they may release methane, a greenhouse gas 23 times more potent than carbon dioxide.

When bioplastics are not distributed through proper waste management streams and mixed in with recycled plastics, they contaminate entire batches and harm recycling infrastructure. Contaminated plastics such as PET (polyethylene terephthalate, used in water bottles) are then bound for landfill. Until separate recycling streams are in place to keep plastics and bioplastics separate, they are not the desired solution to diverting single use plastics from landfill.

Nurdles are the pre-production building blocks for nearly all plastic goods. They are essential for the manufacturing of all products from soda bottles to oil pipelines. In addition to the harmful environmental impacts of the products they comprise, nurdles wreak havoc as an environmental hazard when they are lost during transportation and manufacturing. They are lost to oceans and waterways where they are mistaken for food by animals, wash up on beaches, and leave coastal communities to deal with their adverse effects.

NURDLES

Nurdles weigh approximately 20 milligrams each and are estimated to make up 250,000 tons of plastic pollution in oceans annually. Nurdles and other kinds of plastics make up the majority of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, collected by massive rotating ocean currents called gyres.

ANNEX OF PLASTIC ALTERNATIVES

KITCHEN	
Plastic Product / Packaging	Alternative
Plastic dish soap	Reusable metal container for soap or dish bar <i>Companies we love: Live for Tomorrow, No Tox Life</i>
Plastic cling/Saran wrap	Beeswax wrap
Individually wrapped tea bags	Loose tea & stainless steel tea infuser
Plastic coffee pods	Bulk beans - refilled from local roastery
Plastic packaging on consumables	Glass, metal or silicone reusable containers. Refill in bulk sections. Store food at home.
Plastic garbage bags	No bag! If composting and recycling properly, a bag isn't needed. Check with your curbside collection contractor to see if they'll accept this. Otherwise, use a used paper or plastic bag that you have from another product.
Plastic sponges	Plant-based compostable sponges <i>Company we love: No Tox Life</i>
Disposable metal or plastic pot scrubbers	Bamboo pot scraper, root brush
Parchment paper & aluminum foil	Non-stick silicone mats
Ziploc and other plastic food storage bags	Keep your jars! Reuse glass containers for food storage. Silicone containers for food storage <i>Company we love: Stasher</i>
Plastic bread bags	Reusable cloth bread bag and wooden box <i>Company we love: Dans Le Sac</i>
Plastic ice packs	Stainless steel ice packs
Plastic icecube tray	Stainless steel icecube tray <i>Company we love: Onyx Containers</i>
Plastic cooking utensils	Wooden or metal cooking utensils *We always recommend using what you have first until the end of its life!

ANNEX OF PLASTIC ALTERNATIVES

Plastic cooking ware	Cast iron, stainless steel
Plastic cutting board	Bamboo or wooden cutting board
Plastic measuring cups	Glass measuring cups
Plastic cleaners	Glass or metal cleaners, all purpose cleaner in refillable container from a refillery
Single-use plastic cleaning gloves	Reusable natural rubber household gloves <i>Company we love: If You Care</i>
Plastic wrapped paper towel	Reusable clothes, reusable paper towel <i>Company we love: Ten & Co.</i>

BATHROOM

Plastic toothbrush	Bamboo toothbrush <i>Company we love: Bkind bamboo toothbrush</i>
Plastic floss	Silk floss <i>Company we love: FLOSSPOT- mini mason jar filled with 40M of biodegradable pure silk floss</i>
Plastic toothpaste	Toothpaste in a glass jar <i>Company we love: Nelson Naturals</i>
Eye makeup removers	Reusable cotton rounds
Single-use face & baby wipes	Bamboo face cloths
Plastic wrapped toilet paper	Paper wrapped toilet paper OR go paper free with a Tushy bidet <i>Companies we love: Tork, Who Gives a Crap</i>
Plastic toilet brush	Wooden toilet brush
Plastic shower curtain	Hemp shower curtain <i>Company we love: Life Without Plastic</i>
Synthetic textile bath towels	Linen bath towels
Plastic cotton buds	Bamboo cotton buds

ANNEX OF PLASTIC ALTERNATIVES

Plastic hand wash	Refillable metal dish soap container OR unwrapped bar <i>Company we love: Live for Tomorrow</i>
Plastic tampons and pads	Menstrual cup
Shampoo & conditioner	Unpackaged shampoo & conditioner bars Refilling shampoo & conditioner at refilleries
Plastic safety razor	Reusable metal safety razor <i>Company we love: Well Kept</i>
Plastic deodorant	Paperboard packaged deodorant or glass packaged. <i>Company we love: Mulberry Skincare</i>
Plastic hairbrush	Bamboo hairbrush <i>Company we love: Bkind Bamboo hair brush</i>
Plastic bandages	Bamboo bandages <i>Company we love: Patch Natural Bamboo bandages</i>
Plastic sunscreen	Sunscreen in tin or paperboard containers <i>Companies we love: Avasol, Green Room Body Co.</i>
Plastic hair ties	Silk, linen and cotton hair ties <i>Company we love: Kooshoo</i>
Diapers	Cloth diapers



ANNEX OF PLASTIC ALTERNATIVES

LAUNDRY

Plastic dryer sheets	Wool dryer balls
Plastic detergent	Refillable detergent bottles Soap nuts Laundry strips <i>Company we love: Tru Earth</i>
*Plastic microfibre leakage from wastewater	Install a filtrol, which captures plastic microfibrils from textiles, preventing them from entering the wastewater stream.
Plastic Cloth Pins	Wooden Cloth Pins

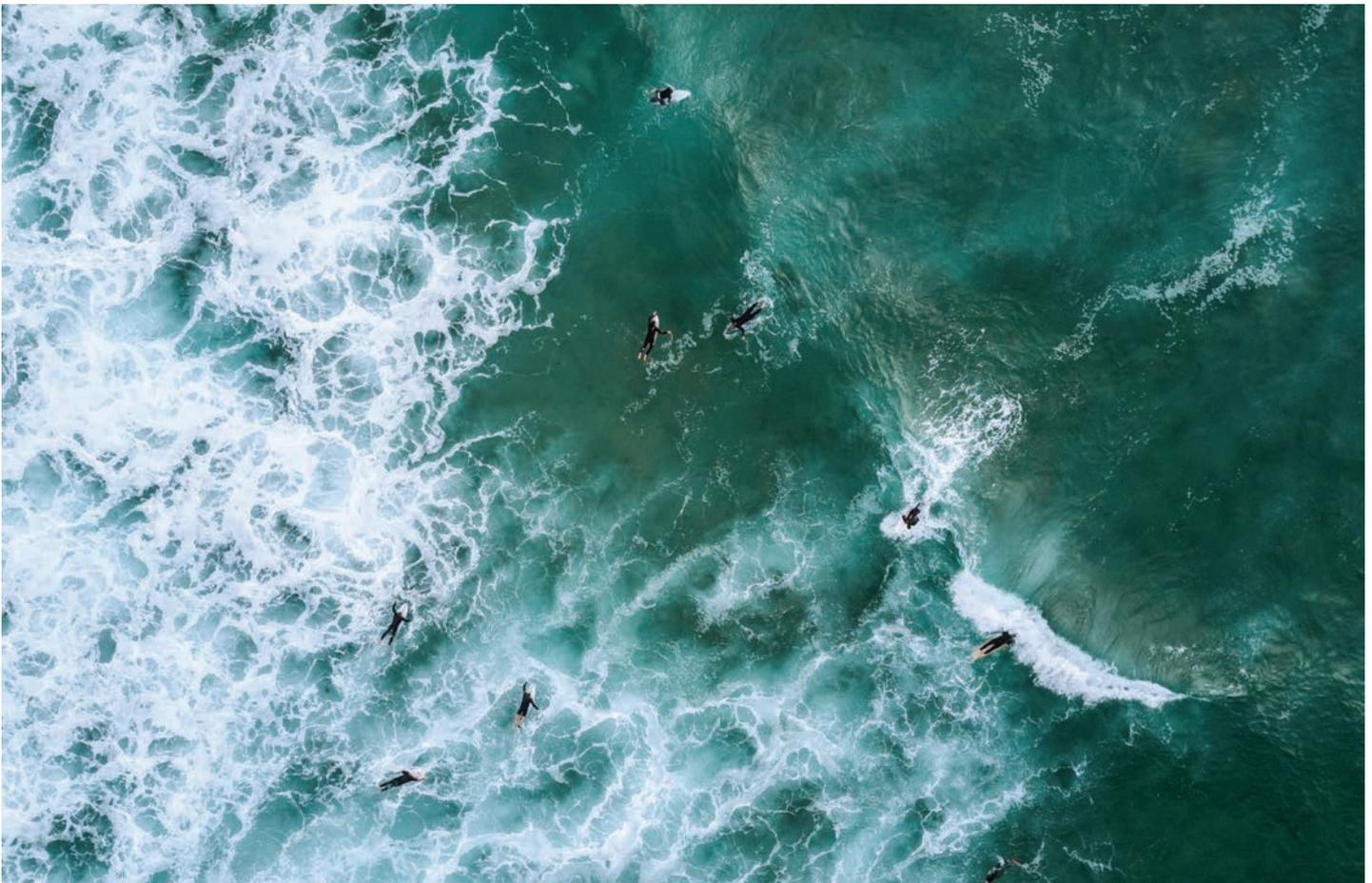
AROUND THE HOUSE: LIVING ROOM & BEDROOM

Plastic wrapped tin candles	Unwrapped beeswax candles
Plastic shelves and storage	Wooden storage units Ceramic bowls for storage
Plastic wrapped kleenex	Paper wrapped - plastic free <i>Company we love: Who Gives a Crap</i>
Plastic hangers	Wooden hangers
Synthetic textile bedding, curtains, pillow covers, couch cover	Natural textile alternatives: linen, bamboo, organic and fair trade cotton, hemp, silk, wool, cashmere
Febreze and other plastic air fresheners	Air fresheners in glass, or DIY with essential oils at home and a reusable spray bottle!
Plastic broom	Wooden broom
Plastic pen	Pencils, refillable metal fountain pens
Plastic children's toys	Wood, paper, and upcycled toys
Plastic phone case	Biodegradable case <i>Company we love: Pela Case</i>

ANNEX OF PLASTIC ALTERNATIVES

OUT & ABOUT

Plastic Product / Packaging	Alternative: Bring this reusable kit with you wherever your travels take you!
Plastic bags	Reusable bags (make at home or buy used!) See Stitch n Beach toolkit for info on how to make.
Plastic to-go containers	Reusable containers. Bring a clean container with you wherever you go!
Plastic takeaway coffee mugs	Reusable mug
Plastic straws	Reusable straw
Plastic cutlery	Reusable cutlery set
Plastic produce bags	Reusable cutlery bags



APPENDIX

1. [Love Your Beach Clean Guideline](#)
2. [Stitch n Beach Toolkit](#)
3. [Ocean Friendly Vacation Rental Toolkit](#)
4. [Ocean Friendly Business Toolkit](#)
5. [Marine Debris Tracker App](#)
6. [Ocean Friendly Resource Portal](#)
all other toolkits, guidelines and resources can also be found on this page



Welcome to the Ocean Friendly Resource Portal, your one stop for all Surfrider Pacific Rim guidelines, toolkits, and how-to's.

In this portal, you'll find DIY Campaigns, DIY Programs, as well as additional resources for vacation rentals, businesses, media, waste management & more. All of these resources will support you in launching plastics initiatives in your communities, with the goal of creating Ocean Friendly communities from coast-to-coast and around the world! If you still have a question that's not answered by the resources below, please fill out the form at the bottom of this page.



SEND A LETTER!

As a consumer, send a message to grocery stores demanding that they listen to their customers and phase out single-use plastic packaging. See example below:

Dear [representative NAME HERE],

My name is [NAME HERE], and I am a customer at [STORE NAME HERE]. During a recent trip to your store, I noticed that it was nearly impossible to avoid single-use plastic packaging when shopping for food and other necessities. I am writing to express my concern about [STORE NAME]'s lack of strong action to do its part to reduce plastic consumption and waste. Even with efforts towards proper recycling, the reality is that only 9% of plastic waste is recycled in Canada. The rest is burned, landfilled or ends up in the environment at home and abroad.

Today, I am requesting that you go beyond current public commitments, and commit to reduce your plastic footprint by taking the following steps:

1. Set annual reduction targets on all problematic and unnecessary plastic packaging and single-use items, toward a complete phase out goal
2. Work with your suppliers to offer reusable and refillable packaging
3. Allow your customers to use their own containers and bags across your various departments
4. Be transparent about the volume of plastic packaging you produce and distribute

There is a growing demand from Canadian's for a movement towards eliminating single use plastics and creating waste-free shopping experiences. Today, [STORE NAME] has the power to be on the leading edge of dramatically reducing the amount plastic packaging being produced and distributed.

Thank you for your attention.

[YOUR NAME HERE]

THANK YOU

WE ARE STOKED TO GO FORWARD MAKING WAVES OF CHANGES WITH YOU!



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