



FINANCE INDUSTRY CALL TO ACTION

SOLVING FOR THE GLOBAL PLASTIC WASTE CRISIS

Global investors and banks are presently enabling the global plastic waste crisis. Every day, plastic flows into nature at an unprecedented rate—a dump truck every minute into our oceans alone. In one year, this plastic waste adds up to 11 million metric tons and impacts over 2,100 species.ⁱⁱⁱ And as this crisis spreads to every corner of the globe, World Wildlife Fund (WWF) is leading the charge to unite industry leaders, the public, and policymakers to transform our material system toward a vision of *No Plastic in Nature by 2030*. While plastic can help make our hospitals safer, our food last longer, and our packages more efficient to ship, it has no place in nature.

The role of business is critical to fixing the broken plastic system and accelerating progress. Businesses are uniquely positioned to reduce waste through improved sourcing, design, and business model innovation within their own supply chains and by supporting recycling and composting system improvement efforts beyond their own supply chains. Through this lens, we find that as few as 100 companies have the potential to prevent roughly 10 million metric tons of the world's plastic waste per year.ⁱⁱⁱ Some of the world's biggest companies have already begun large-scale plastic commitments to reduce, reuse, re-source, and recycle.

Bold action is needed to address this crisis, as financial incentives currently favor the status quo. According to a [Minderoo Foundation report](#), twenty polymer producers accounted for more than half of all single-use plastic waste generated globally in 2019, while the top 100 polymer producers accounted for 90% of single-use plastic waste generation. Institutional asset managers and global banks are investing in single-use plastic waste by providing billions of dollars to these polymer producers—nearly 100 times more than they provide to companies shifting towards a circular economy.

WWF recommends the finance industry take action to reduce plastic waste in the following ways:

- **Disclosing the level of lending and investment in virgin versus recycled polymer production and the associated generation of single-use plastic waste** (e.g., investments in oil and natural gas production, investment in plastic production plants, etc.). A measure of lending and investment in polymer production must be included in annual environmental, social, and governance reporting. Shareholders and customers have the right to know whether their money is being invested in or lent to entities fueling the plastic waste crisis.
- **Committing to investments in a circular economy.** Adopt policies and targets that shift capital away from virgin polymer production and toward the use of recycled and biobased content and/or reuse systems, aiming to entirely phase out the financing of virgin single-use plastic production. For example, see [Circulate Capital's investment portfolio and criteria](#), including debt and equity funding to waste management, recycling, and circular economy start-ups along with investments in innovative technologies and business models.
- **Using measures of circularity to inform capital allocation decisions and shareholder action.** Active fund managers should be using circularity metrics as a screening criterion for investments while passive fund managers should use the same metrics to take action at shareholder meetings and exert influence over boards and management. Banks should evaluate a business' contribution to the circular economy when making lending considerations. For more information, see [WWF's report on integrating plastics impact evaluation into ESG assessments](#).
- **Applying to join [PRI's Plastics Investor Working Group](#)**, a convening of global investors focused on enhancing investor understanding of how to address plastic waste and support a circular economy for plastics. See PRI's guides on how to engage with key sectors in the plastic packaging value chain, including the [petrochemicals](#), [container and packaging](#), [fast-moving consumer goods](#), and [waste management sectors](#).
- **Joining the [U.S. Plastics Pact](#)**, a collaborative, solutions-driven consortium to unify diverse public-private stakeholders across the plastics value chain and rethink the way we design, use, and reuse plastic in the United States.



- **Advocating for changes needed to shift from a linear to circular economy in the U.S. and globally**, including by promoting principles that shift the incentives for waste—as outlined in [WWF's 5-Point Roadmap to Materials Circularity](#)—and by [supporting a UN treaty on plastic pollution](#).

WWF is fighting for a world with no plastic in nature by 2030. It's a world where our oceans teem with marine life, not discarded nets, bottles, and bags/cups; where no human breathes the toxic fumes of burning plastic; and where every indispensable plastic product is used to make another. We need all stakeholders to think differently, to innovate, and to provide solutions that not only make us better stewards of the resources we are taking from the planet but also make sure we keep them in the system so they can be used again and again.

Please contact Erin.Simon@wwfus.org and Jessica.Zeuner@wwfus.org with any questions.

Visit our program websites to learn more about how WWF is addressing the plastic pollution crisis:



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- i "Breaking the Plastic Wave: A Comprehensive Assessment of Pathways Towards Stopping Ocean Plastic Pollution." The Pew Charitable Trusts and SYSTEMIQ, 2020. https://www.pewtrusts.org/-/media/assets/2020/10/breakingtheplasticwave_mainreport.pdf.
- ii "Impacts of plastic pollution in the oceans on marine species, biodiversity and ecosystems." World Wildlife Fund and the Alfred Wegener Institute, 2022. https://wwfint.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/wwf_impacts_of_plastic_pollution_on_biodiversity.pdf.
- iii Analysis conducted by WWF using data from UNEP, Trucost, and the Plastic Disclosure Project.