



RETAIL INDUSTRY CALL TO ACTION

SOLVING FOR THE GLOBAL PLASTIC WASTE CRISIS

Every day, plastic flows into our natural environment 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.ⁱⁱ 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.

The retail industry and its key stakeholders, including brick-and-mortar and online retailers along with manufacturers, suppliers, and wholesalers, have an important role in contributing to the solution for plastic pollution. Retailers themselves are key to mainstreaming reuse, as they are the most important interaction point with brands and with the public and have the ability to both drive supply chain changes and shift consumer behavior.

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

- **Join WWF's [ReSource: Plastic](#) platform to turn ambitious plastic reduction commitments into meaningful, measurable action.** Using the ReSource Footprint Tracker, WWF's team helps businesses track year-over-year progress towards public commitments and provides expert guidance across a business' entire plastic portfolio. By participating in this transparent reporting platform, retailers can best determine where their most negative impact is and where they should be engaging their suppliers or their communities to take action for the greatest impact.
- **Join 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.
- **Implement reuse systems wherever possible, transitioning away from single-use plastic products and packaging.** Retailers are key to enabling and scaling reuse solutions. To begin, start with reuse pilots to test scalability—use pilot data to guide decision-making on what products and/or markets are best suited for reuse models. For more information on reuse, see key resources from the World Economic Forum's Consumers Beyond Waste Initiative: [Executive Summary](#), [City Playbook](#), [Design Guidelines](#), and [Safety Guidelines](#). Join the community transitioning to more reusable systems that work for the products you sell and the communities you serve. For example, see [Loop's in-store and e-commerce reuse solutions for retailers](#).
- **Eliminate single-use plastic bags and packaging,** including single-use plastic bags at checkout and produce bags along with single-use plastic packaging used for shipping online sales (e.g., plastic film, expanded polystyrene, etc.). For more information, see [Closed Loop Partners' Beyond the Bag Challenge](#).
- **Advocate for the changes needed to shift from a linear to a circular economy in the U.S. and globally** by promoting principles of extended producer responsibility, environmental justice, and international leadership to reimagine our linear economies, as outlined in [WWF's 5-Point Roadmap to Materials Circularity](#); by joining [OneSource Coalition](#); 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.

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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.