

# WORKABLE SOLUTIONS FOR MARINE LITTER

The American Chemistry Council and its members agree that plastics don't belong in our oceans and waterways. We stand with those scientists and policy makers who have found that effective solutions require actions to improve waste management infrastructure, increase litter prevention, and develop strong regional and international partnerships.



## WHERE DOES MARINE LITTER COME FROM?

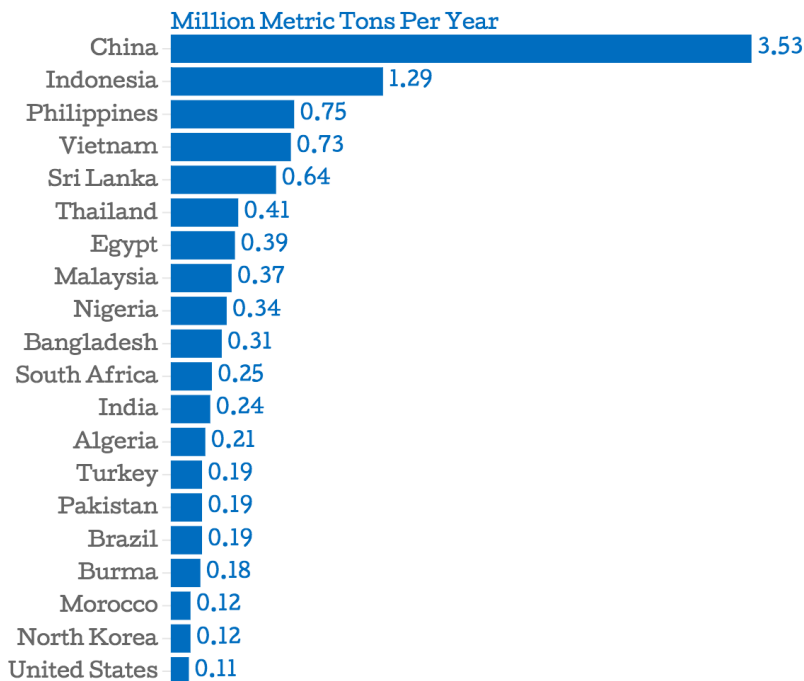
The majority of marine litter originates on land either as unmanaged waste or as street litter that ends up in nearby waterways.

A study in Science by Jambeck et al (2015) estimates the input of plastic waste from land to ocean.

### Key findings:

- The amount of plastic waste entering the ocean from land each year exceeds 4.8 million metric tons (MMT) and may be as high as 12.7 MMT.
- Twenty countries account for 83% of the mismanaged plastic waste available to enter the ocean. The largest sources are rapidly developing economies, mainly in Asia, where basic waste management infrastructure has not kept pace with the rise in demand for consumer goods.

## PLASTIC DEBRIS ENTERING WORLD OCEANS (EST.)



Chartbuilder

Data: Jenna R. Jambeck et. al.

## WHAT SHOULD BE DONE TO KEEP PLASTIC LITTER OUT OF THE OCEANS?

A number of scientific studies have concluded that plastic litter in the ocean is the result of poor or insufficient waste management and lack of sufficient collection, recycling and recovery facilities infrastructure. Working in partnership, industry, NGOs, national governments, and the United Nations have determined that prevention through waste management is the key to keeping used plastics out of our oceans.

As a signature initiative of its Trash Free Seas Alliance®, Ocean Conservancy worked with the McKinsey Center for Business & Environment to lead a comprehensive study, *Stemming the Tide: Land-Based Strategies for a Plastic-Free Ocean*. The report identifies solutions for reducing plastic inputs to the ocean and recommends a program for global action to solve the problem. Here are some of the study's major recommendations:

- Close leakage points within local collection systems by optimizing transport systems to eliminate illegal dumping
- Close or improve dump sites located near waterways, and increase waste collection rates by offering expanded services

Solid waste planning objectives must leverage the waste management hierarchy that emphasizes waste reduction and reuse followed by recycling and recovery. Learning to view post-use materials as resources for manufacturing and renewable energy will help keep valuable materials out of waterways and landfills and in productive economic use.

## PLASTICS MAKERS IN ACTION

Through the American Chemistry Council, America's Plastics Makers® helped lead the development of the industry's *Global Declaration on Solutions for Marine Litter*, which has been signed by 75 plastics associations in 40 countries.

Currently, more than 355 projects focused on researching, preventing, or reducing marine debris are underway around the globe. This represents an increase of more than three and a half times the number of projects since the Global Declaration was announced in 2011. Projects vary widely, from expanding waste management capacities, to advocating effective public policies, to creating education campaigns.

Reducing marine litter requires the collaboration of governments, non-governmental organizations, researchers, industry, and other stakeholders. Plastics makers partner with NGOs and other public and private sector actors to develop and pilot systemic interventions that will focus resources where they can have the most immediate and significant impact – regions and economies where the most waste enters the ocean. Solutions to this important problem must include reduction, reuse, increased recycling and recovery, tough litter abatement laws, and well-run municipal waste management systems.

Actions will vary by region and must start with waste collection. In the U.S. we have recently established ambitious goals for capturing, recycling, and recovering plastics:

- 100% of plastics packaging is re-used, recycled or recovered by 2040.
- 100% of plastics packaging is recyclable or recoverable by 2030.
- 100% of the U.S. manufacturing sites operated by ACC's Plastics Division members will participate in *Operation Clean Sweep blue* by 2020, with all of their manufacturing sites across North America involved by 2022.

For more on our work visit [www.marinelittersolutions.com/us](http://www.marinelittersolutions.com/us)