



California's Microplastics Strategy

Solutions and research to address microplastic pollution

Plastics are a global threat to ocean health. Microplastics (synthetic particles < 5 mm in size) are pervasive and persistent global pollutants that are increasingly observed in even remote environments. Whether intentionally created at this small size or broken down from larger plastics, microplastics harm ocean wildlife and can impact human health.

In 2022, California adopted a **Statewide Microplastics Strategy**, the first comprehensive effort in the United States to tackle microplastic pollution. The Strategy provides a multi-year roadmap for California to take early actions and identifies research priorities to reduce and manage microplastic pollution in California's coastal and marine environments.

To read the Strategy,
please visit:

bit.ly/CA-MPS



California's Microplastics Strategy prioritizes precautionary management of microplastic pollution.

The **Statewide Microplastics Strategy** takes a comprehensive, multi-pronged approach to simultaneously advance early, multi-benefit solutions and research priorities:

1. **Pollution Prevention:** to eliminate plastic waste at the source, including source reduction and reduction targets, reuse, and extended producer responsibility.
2. **Intervention:** to intervene within specific pathways, including stormwater or wastewater, that mobilize microplastics to California waters.
3. **Science-informed Action:** to prioritize monitoring and research that advances understanding and informs future approaches to reduce microplastic pollution.

What is California Doing?

Pollution Prevention: California has enacted a number of statewide plastic waste reduction laws, including a statewide ban on intentionally added microbeads in consumer products (AB 888, ch. 594 of statutes 2015), a statewide single-use plastic bag ban (SB 270, ch. 850 of statutes 2014), and single-use plastic straws and foodware upon request (AB 1884, ch. 576 of statutes 2018 and AB 1276, ch. 505 of statutes 2021).

Since the adoption of the Statewide Microplastics Strategy in 2022, California enacted the Plastic Pollution Prevention and Packaging Producer Responsibility Act (SB 54, ch. 75 of statutes 2022), which requires single-use plastic packaging and foodware be reduced by 25%, requires 65% of single-use plastic packaging and foodware be physically recycled, and requires 100% of single-use packaging and foodware be recyclable or compostable by 2032. The law shifts the plastic pollution burden from consumers to producers by raising \$5 billion from industry over 10 years through extended producer responsibility to reduce plastic pollution and support disadvantaged communities impacted by plastic pollution.

Intervention: California has a series of existing policies and water quality requirements to address and prevent trash, which is largely composed of plastic, from reaching California waterways. This includes statewide requirements to limit the escape of plastic production pellets ('nurdles') and to prohibit the discharge of trash in stormwater runoff with an overarching goal of no trash present in state waters by 2030.

Science-Informed Action: California has invested in foundational plastics research and monitoring, including standardized microplastics measurement and field sampling methods, the development of a statewide plastics monitoring plan, and microplastic health effects that may support accelerate science and microplastics understanding worldwide.

California is taking a precautionary and science-informed approach to address the full life-cycle and impacts of plastic and microplastic pollution.

Contact

Christine Sur, *Water Quality Program Manager*

Christine.Sur@resources.ca.gov

Kaitlyn Kalua, *Deputy Director*

Kaitlyn.Kalua@resources.ca.gov

