

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 296

Designating July 2023 as “Plastic Pollution Action Month”.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 13, 2023

Mr. MERKLEY submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the
Committee on the Judiciary

RESOLUTION

Designating July 2023 as “Plastic Pollution Action Month”.

Whereas plastic pollution represents a global threat that will require individual and collective action, both nationally and internationally, to address;

Whereas 450,000,000 tons of plastic is produced each year, a number that is projected to triple by 2050;

Whereas, in the United States—

(1) the rate of plastic waste recycling decreased in 2021 to between 4 and 6 percent; and

(2) less than 3 percent of plastic waste is recycled into a similar quality product;

Whereas a recent study from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development found that, in 2022, the United States—

(1) mismanaged 4 percent of plastic waste;

- (2) landfilled 73 percent of plastic waste;
- (3) incinerated 19 percent of plastic waste; and
- (4) recycled 4 percent of plastic waste;

Whereas single-use plastics account for at least 40 percent of the plastic produced every year;

Whereas over 12,000,000 tons of plastic waste enter the ocean every year from land-based sources alone;

Whereas if no action is taken, the flow of plastics into the ocean is expected to triple by 2040;

Whereas recent studies estimate that there are 171,000,000,000,000 pieces of plastic in the oceans of the world;

Whereas of the 171,000,000,000,000 pieces of plastic in the ocean, 1 percent floats, 5 percent washes up on beaches, and 94 percent sinks to the bottom;

Whereas nearly 1,300 marine species have consumed plastics;

Whereas plastics, and associated chemicals of plastics, are ingested by humans and are associated with well-established human health risks;

Whereas studies have found microplastic particles in human blood, lungs, colons, and placentas;

Whereas studies suggest that humans ingest over 800 microplastics per day;

Whereas taking action to reduce plastic use, collect and clean up litter, and reuse and recycle more plastics will lead to less plastic pollution;

Whereas, every July, people challenge themselves to reduce their plastic footprint through “Plastics Free July”;

Whereas, over the last 40 years, over 17,000,000 volunteers have joined the International Coastal Cleanup to collect more than 350,000,000 pounds of plastic and debris while simultaneously recording their findings to inform research and upstream action;

Whereas switching to reusable items instead of single-use items can prevent waste, save water, and reduce litter; and

Whereas July 2023, is an appropriate month to designate as Plastic Pollution Action Month to recommit to taking action, individually and as a country, to reduce plastic pollution: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) designates July 2023 as “Plastic Pollution
3 Action Month”;

4 (2) recognizes the dangers to human health and
5 the environment posed by plastic pollution; and

6 (3) encourages all individuals in the United
7 States to protect, conserve, maintain, and rebuild
8 public health and the environment by responsibly
9 participating in activities to reduce plastic pollution
10 in July 2023 and year-round.

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