

**ASSEMBLY CONCURRENT
RESOLUTION No. 198**

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

218th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED OCTOBER 22, 2018

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman NANCY J. PINKIN

District 18 (Middlesex)

Assemblyman JAMES J. KENNEDY

District 22 (Middlesex, Somerset and Union)

Assemblywoman LISA SWAIN

District 38 (Bergen and Passaic)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman Jasey, Assemblymen McKeon and Calabrese

SYNOPSIS

Urges cooperative approach among all levels of government to provide funding and other resources to clean up plastic pollution.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 1/14/2020)

1 **A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION** respectfully urging all levels of
2 government to take action to remove plastic from the State
3 waters.
4
5 **WHEREAS**, Global annual plastics production increased from two
6 million tons in 1950 to 381 million tons in 2015; and
7 **WHEREAS**, Single-use plastics are defined as plastic packaging and
8 other consumer products made out of plastic that are designed to be
9 used once and thrown away after a brief use; and
10 **WHEREAS**, Single-use plastics include bottles, cups, plastic lids, bags,
11 plates, utensils, straws, stirrers, swabs, food containers, plastic film
12 wraps, and plastic packaging; and
13 **WHEREAS**, Americans purchase 50 billion water bottles per year, with
14 an average of 13 bottles per month per person; and
15 **WHEREAS**, Additionally, 100 billion plastic bags and 25 billion
16 styrofoam plastic coffee cups are thrown away by Americans each
17 year, which averages to 307 plastic bags and 77 cups per person per
18 year; and
19 **WHEREAS**, Not all single-use plastic waste reaches landfills or is
20 recycled; and
21 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey's current post-consumer plastics recycling
22 rates vary between six to nine percent, although, some calculations
23 indicate recycling rates maybe around 13 percent; and
24 **WHEREAS**, Single-use plastic waste creates visual pollution and
25 impacts tourism, fishing, and shipping industries; and
26 **WHEREAS**, Mismanaged single-use plastic blocks drainage systems,
27 releases toxic fumes if burned, becomes land pollution, and
28 contaminates the food chain; and
29 **WHEREAS**, Further, unrecycled plastics are disposed of in landfills,
30 dumpsites, or incinerators, or end up in waterways and oceans
31 where they will remain for hundreds or even thousands of years;
32 and
33 **WHEREAS**, The United Nations Environment Program reports that the
34 more than eight million tons of plastics that ends up in lakes and
35 oceans each year is equal to dumping a garbage truck of plastic
36 every minute; and
37 **WHEREAS**, Furthermore, plastics released in the environment typically
38 do not biodegrade, but instead break into smaller pieces, called
39 microplastics, which accumulate in the natural environment; and
40 **WHEREAS**, There are multiple environmental concerns associated with
41 microplastics in surface waters; and
42 **WHEREAS**, There is evidence that microplastic pollution can move
43 through natural food webs and accumulate in fin fish and shellfish
44 tissues, which means microplastics and associated pollutants have
45 the potential to move into the human food chain; and
46 **WHEREAS**, The presence of plastics in surface waters is extensively
47 documented in both freshwater systems and in the world's oceans;
48 and

6 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the General Assembly of the State of New*
7 *Jersey (the Senate concurring):*

2. Copies of this Resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State, shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the General Assembly or the Secretary of the Senate to the Administrator or the United States Environmental Protection Agency, the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Governor and Attorney General of the State of New Jersey, the Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, every member of Congress elected from the State of New Jersey, the President of the New Jersey Conference of Mayors, and the President of the League of Municipalities.

29 This resolution respectfully urges all levels of government to
30 take cooperative action, including providing funding and other
31 resources, to remove plastic from the State waters in order to
32 decrease the amount of plastic entering into marine waters and
33 ultimately into human food chains.

Global annual plastics production increased from two million tons in 1950 to 381 million tons in 2015. Single-use plastics are defined as plastic packaging and other consumer products made out of plastic that are designed to be used once and thrown away after a brief use. Single-use plastics include bottles, cups, plastic lids, bags, plates, utensils, straws, stirrers, swabs, food containers, plastic film wraps, and plastic packaging. Americans purchase 50 billion water bottles per year, with an average of 13 bottles per month per person. Additionally, 100 billion plastic bags and 25 billion styrofoam plastic coffee cups are thrown away by Americans each year, which averages to 307 plastic bags and 77 cups per person per year. Not all single use plastic waste reaches landfills or are recycled. New Jersey's current post-consumer plastics recycling rates vary between six to nine percent, although, some calculations indicate recycling rates may be around 13 percent.

1 Single-use plastic waste creates visual pollution and impacts
2 tourism, fishing, and shipping industries. Mismanaged single-use
3 plastic blocks drainage systems, releases toxic fumes if burned,
4 becomes land pollution, and contaminates the food chain. Further,
5 unrecycled plastics are disposed of in landfills, dumpsites, or
6 incinerators, or end up in waterways and oceans where they will
7 remain for hundreds or even thousands of years.

8 The United Nations Environment Program reports that the more
9 than eight million tons of plastics that ends up in lakes and oceans
10 each year is equal to dumping a garbage truck of plastic every minute.
11 Furthermore, plastics released in the environment typically do not
12 biodegrade, but instead break into smaller pieces, called microplastics,
13 which accumulate in the natural environment. There are multiple
14 environmental concerns associated with microplastics in surface
15 waters. There is evidence that microplastic pollution can move
16 through natural food webs and accumulate in fin fish and shellfish
17 tissues, which means microplastics and associated pollutants have the
18 potential to move into the human food chain. The presence of plastics
19 in surface waters is extensively documented in both freshwater
20 systems and in the world's oceans. It is imperative that all levels of
21 government work together to clean up plastics from our fresh
22 waterbodies, oceans, and other marine waters in order to protect the
23 environment and public health.