

Pathways to Plastic Reduction: A Symposium on Strategies for Los Angeles

U.S. EPA Plastics and Environmental Justice Policy, Funding & Research

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Environmental Justice

The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

This goal will be achieved when everyone enjoys:

- The same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards, and
- Equal access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn, and work.



EPA Administrator Regan announcing the Agency's new Office of Environmental Justice and Civil Rights.

<https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice>

<https://www.epa.gov/perspectives/epas-new-office-environmental-justice-and-external-civil-rights-moment-history>

“We must combat plastic pollution from every angle and prevent it at every step of the plastic lifecycle.”

- EPA Administrator Michael S. Regan



EPA International Priorities: Climate, Environmental Justice, Plastics

EPA Administrator Region chaired an Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development meeting of environment ministers where nations committed to shared goals to **address climate change, combatting plastic pollution, and environmental justice and equity.**

<https://www.oecd.org/environment/plastics/>

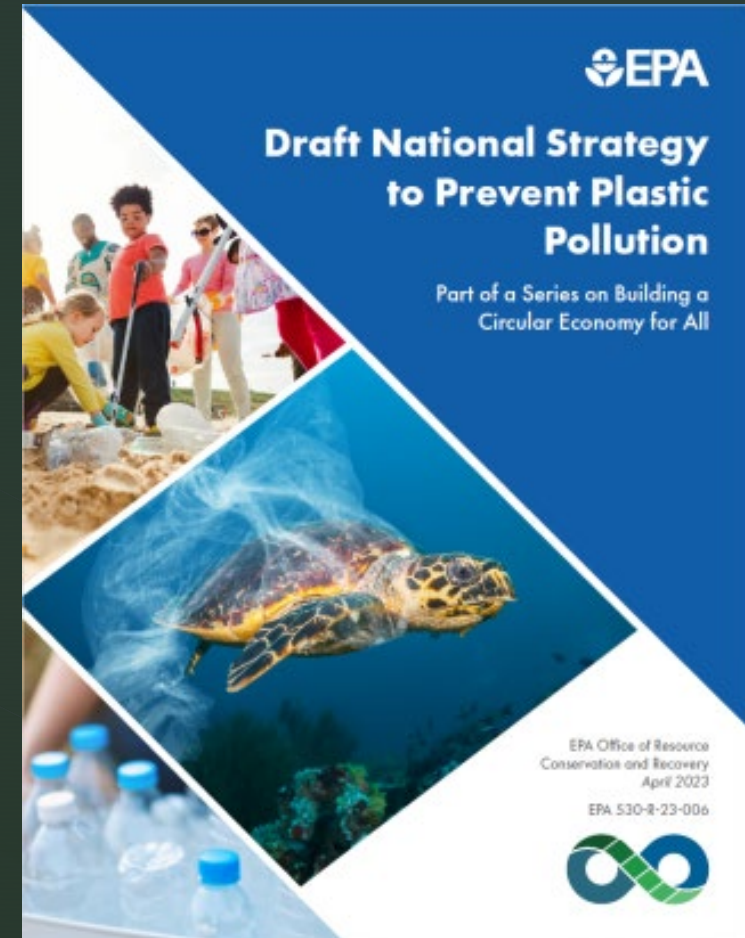
<https://www.epa.gov/smm/resources-waste-and-climate-change>

▶ EPA Draft National Plastics Strategy to Prevent Plastic Pollution – EJ Focused

“For the first time, EPA’s 2022–2026 Strategic Plan includes a new strategic goal focused solely on advancing environmental justice and civil rights. **EPA will center its mission on integrating justice, equity, and civil rights across the nation’s environmental protection enterprise, including waste management.**”

“Disparate impacts on communities affected by plastic, from production to waste, make environmental justice a central consideration within this strategy.”

<https://www.epa.gov/circulareconomy/draft-national-strategy-prevent-plastic-pollution>



➤ Draft National Strategy Content

“Many “fenceline” communities in the United States—communities that surround chemical and petrochemical processing facilities—consist primarily of minority and low-income populations who suffer disproportionately from increased respiratory and nervous system diseases from exposure to toxic pollutants from production or hazardous waste facilities (NASEM, 2022) in addition to other social, economic, and ecological burdens they experience.”

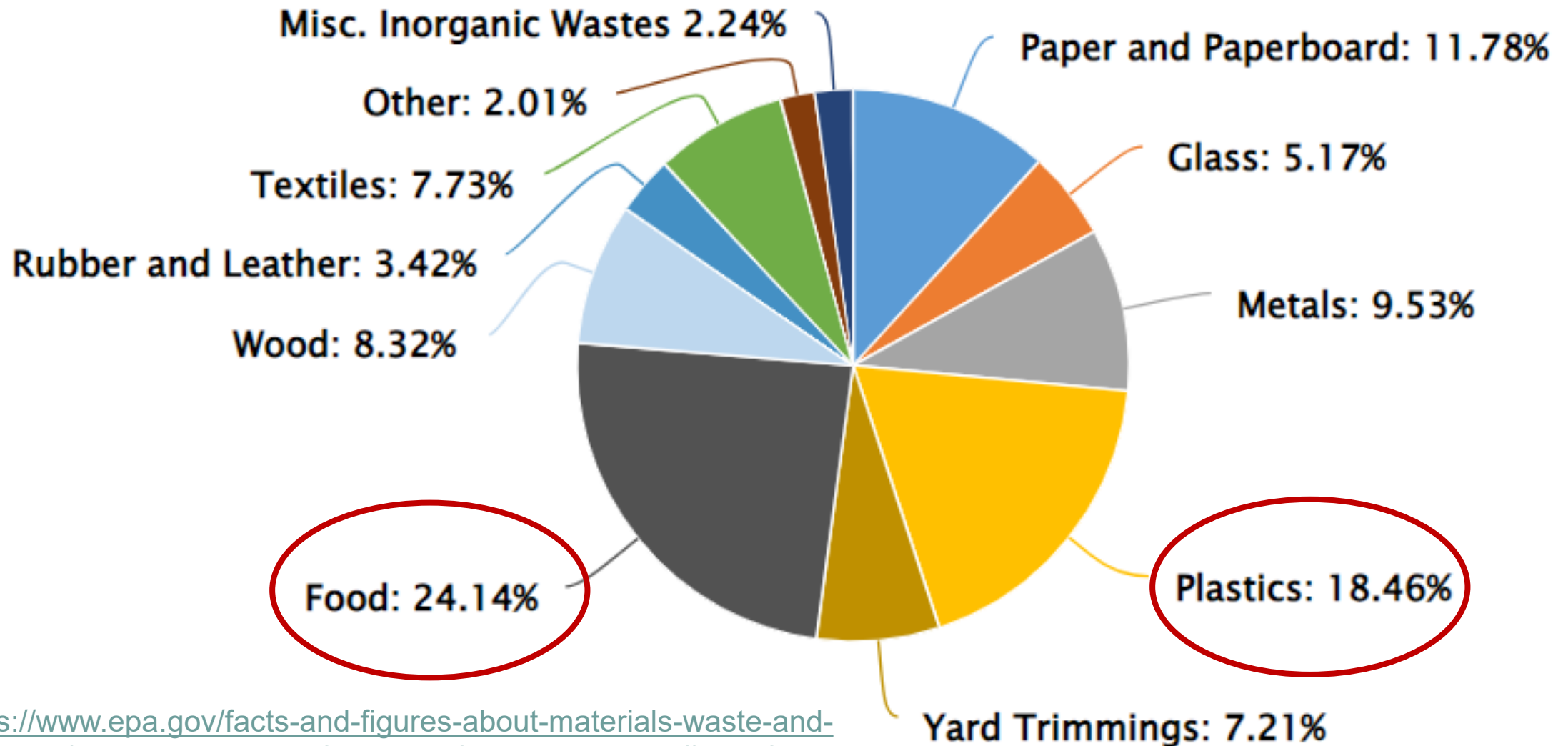
Objectives:

- Reduce pollution during plastic production
- Improve post-use materials management
- Prevent trash and micro/nanoplastics from entering waterways and remove escaped trash from the environment



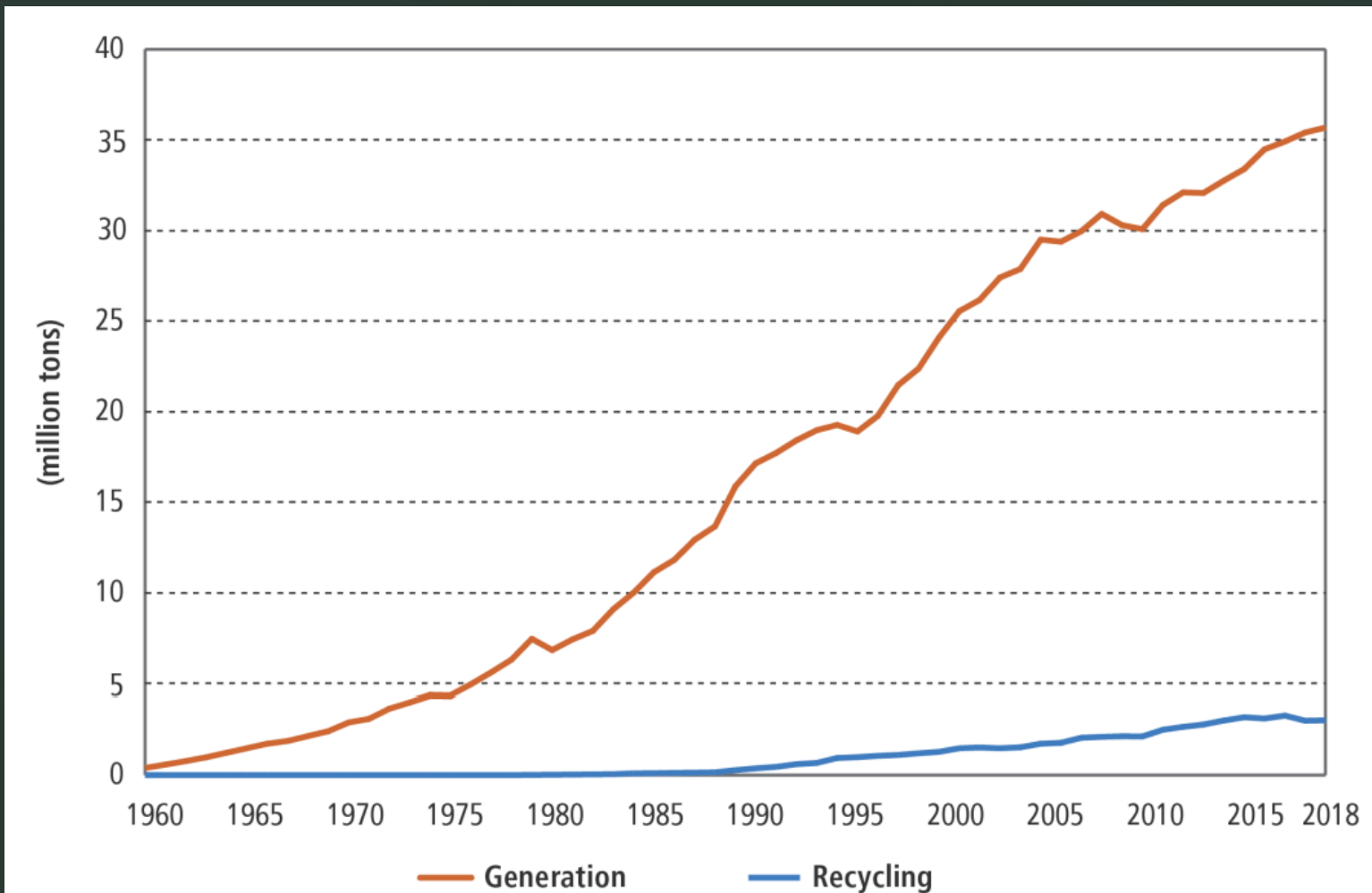
Total MSW Landfill by Material, 2018

146.1 million tons



EPA National Plastics Waste & Recycling Data

Plastics Generation & Recycling, 1960 - 2018



% Recycled & Composted

	2018
Paper and Paperboard	68%
Glass	25%
Plastics	9%
Yard Trimmings	63%
Lead-acid Batteries	99%

▸ Global Plastic Health Impacts

- **Fragmentation into microplastics** – found in humans (additional research on health impacts needed)
- **Exposure to chemical additives** - carcinogenic chemicals found in plastics leach into tap water, which may cause developmental, reproductive, neurological, and immune disorders
- **Spread of infectious diseases**
- **Air pollution from waste burning**

EPA, Addressing Plastic Waste, <https://www.epa.gov/international-cooperation/solid-waste-management-toolkit-developing-countries-guide-companion>



Plastics Research

EPA Trash Free Waters Program

- <https://www.epa.gov/trash-free-waters/science-case-studies>
- <https://www.epa.gov/water-research/microplastics-research>

Product Stewardship Institute (EPA grantee), Marine Debris & Plastic Source Reduction Toolkit for Colleges & Universities

<https://www.epa.gov/trash-free-waters/marine-debris-campus-toolkit>

National Academies of Science, Reckoning with the U.S. Role in Global Ocean Plastic Waste

<https://nap.nationalacademies.org/resource/other/dels/plastics-in-the-ocean/>

OECD Plastics Reports

<https://www.oecd.org/environment/plastics/>



EPA Grants: Hilo, Hawaii

Over \$2.1 Million for Innovative Reuse and Refill Program

- **Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling Grant** – Hawai'i County: Design and implement city-scale reusable food ware and refillable bottle system
 - **Install Infrastructure:** Reuse collection bins, transport vehicles, crates/totes, dishwashing machine, and a technology platform for asset tracking and management
 - **Outcome:** 1 million uses of reusable food ware in place of disposable food ware and reduction of disposable food ware by 500 tons annually
- **Pollution Prevention Grant** – University of Hawai'i – Technical assistance for 100 businesses, community organizations and schools to implement reusable food ware
 - **Culturally relevant education and outreach:** City-wide reusable food ware system
 - **Outcome:** 1,820,000 uses per year of a more sustainable safer cups and reduction of 540,000 disposable items

Hilo Grant Kick-Off Event



“This model reuse program will eliminate polluting single-use plastics and packaging to protect community health, cut waste and marine debris and reduce greenhouse gas emissions,” said **EPA Pacific Southwest Regional Administrator Martha Guzman**. “The results of this program will help inform zero waste actions around the country and the world.”

<https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/biden-harris-administration-makes-over-21-million-grant-investments-innovative-reuse>

2023 EPA EJ Community Problem Solving Grants Waste Related Activities - \$500,000 each

Tennessee Environmental Council, TN - Community Recycling Roundup Series Expansion to collect recyclables in rural communities

YESS! of Charles County, Inc., Charles County, MD - Solid waste disposal mapping & community visioning

John Bartram Association, Philadelphia, PA - Pollution and illegal dumping policy and cleanups

Thrive New Orleans, New Orleans, MS - Fifty high school BIPOC youth learn about environmental issues including waste literacy and waste management strategies to keep their communities clean

Grades of Green Inglewood/LA, CA - Environmental education, training and programs, address accessibility, develop implementation systems for waste diversion and establish food recovery/donation of edible food at Inglewood Unified School District

Kaunalewa ,Kauai, HI - Mitigation of solid waste and pesticides along aquatic passageways, community remediation programs to reduce negative environmental activities (e.g., illegal dumping)

Program Information & Full Project Descriptions:

<https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/environmental-justice-collaborative-problem-solving-cooperative-agreement-5>

➤ Open Grant Program: Environmental and Climate Justice Community Change Grants

- **Funding:** \$2 billion for financial assistance, and \$200 million for technical assistance
 - \$10-20 million/grant – Community-Driven Investments for Change
 - \$1-3 million/grant - Meaningful Engagement for Equitable Governance
- **Eligibility:** A partnership between two community-based non-profit organizations (CBOs)
OR a partnership between a CBO and one of the following:
 - Federally-Recognized Tribe
 - local government
 - institution of higher education.
- **Rolling Applications until Nov. 21, 2024, so Apply Early** - potential technical assistance to improve the application and re-apply

<https://www.epa.gov/inflation-reduction-act/inflation-reduction-act-environmental-and-climate-justice-program>

Open Climate Pollution Reduction Grants > Stakeholder Involvement - \$5 Billion

- **Phase 1 – Planning Grants** – Awarded - developing **PRIORITY CLIMATE ACTION PLANS** with interagency & disadvantaged community input by March 2024
- Materials Management and Waste is a Key Sector
 - Metro Area: County of Los Angeles Public Works
 - State: [California Air Resources Board](#) - Subscribe for updates
- **OPEN - Phase 2 – Implementation Grants** (\$4.6 billion total) competitive grants to state and local governments to implement actions in **Priority Climate Action Plans**. (\$4.6 billion total; \$2 to \$500 million per grant)

<https://www.epa.gov/inflation-reduction-act/climate-pollution-reduction-grants>

<https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2023-09/CPRG%20General%20Competition%20NOFO.pdf>

Coming Soon: Thriving Communities Grantmakers

- To reduce federal grants process burdens on small, resource-constrained community-based organizations supporting underserved communities and marginalized populations (No Grants.gov application)
- 11 Grantmakers (selected) will receive \$600 million to serve as pass-through entities to provide subgrants to community-based nonprofits and other eligible subrecipients for assessment, planning, and project development activities
- Application details are under development – subgrants anticipated starting spring/summer 2024

▶ Thank you for your important work –
let's keep in touch!

- **André Villaseñor - villasenor.andre@epa.gov**
- **In the Loop with EPA – Monthly Circular Economy Updates**
<https://www.epa.gov/circulareconomy/previous-loop-epa-circular-economy-updates>
- **To join the national EJ Listserv, send a blank email to: Join-epa-ej@lists.epa.gov**
- **To join R9-specific EJ Communications distribution list, email your contact info to: sigal.abdulfetah@epa.gov**
- **EPA Region 9 EJ Resources, Announcements & Events:**
Send blank email to Sigal.Abdulfetah@epa.gov
- **EPA Region 9 Zero Waste Updates:** Send with “Subscribe” to Hood.Timonie@epa.gov