



Cape Plastic Bottle Ban

an initiative of
 Sustainable Practices

We live in a consumption-driven economy where the measurement of growth is dependent on a product's lifecycle from production to waste. The more that is produced, consumed, and discarded, the higher the value of our gross domestic product, GDP. Unfortunately, non-market costs, such as pollution and disposal are not included in product prices. This means that we can overconsume resources because we are only looking at a fraction of the cost to the environment, society, and even our health. Awareness of the impact of our consumption decisions is a responsible use of the freedom of choice and also reflects an understanding of our common future.

The Cape Plastic Bottle Ban is an educational and citizen advocacy program that will increase the awareness of the environmental and human impact of plastic bottle consumption. Our goal is to limit the purchase and distribution of plastic bottled beverages. Our present initiative focuses on the elimination of plastic bottled beverage purchase, sale, and distribution by Town, Regional, and County governments on Cape Cod.

Plastic is a man-made environmental issue that impacts life on our planet and in the US. As the largest consumers of plastic bottled beverages, we have to acknowledge and assume responsibility for our consumption for the benefit of present and future generations.

Plastic use is a US issue:

There are 50 billion plastic bottles consumed every year, about 30 billion of them in the US. **We consume roughly 60 percent of the world's plastic bottles, even though we're about 4.5 percent of the world population. The majority of plastic bottles are from the sale and distribution of water! There are 1,500 water bottles consumed per SECOND in the U.S.**

Plastic use has a global impact:

1. **Plastic is non-renewable resource intensive and has a significant carbon footprint.** We use 17 million barrels of oil each year just to produce water bottles. That's enough oil to keep a million cars fueled for a whole year! The energy used to pump, process, transport, and refrigerate plastic bottled beverages requires more than 50 million barrels of oil every year.
2. **Plastic is a human and environmental health hazard.** Plastic contains and absorbs pollutants like BPA and PVCs that are known to be human endocrine disruptors. Through plastic containers these chemicals and others can leech into the beverages we consume.

Plastic does not biodegrade. While it will break down into smaller parts based on sun exposure, it will never degrade into a natural substance. Plastic fragments absorb toxins that pollute our waterways, contaminate our soil, and sicken animals (which we then eat).

Plastic bottles and plastic bags are the most prevalent form of pollution found on our beaches and in our oceans — one mile of the ocean has over 46,000 pieces of floating plastic in it. Ten percent of the plastic manufactured worldwide ends up in the ocean, the majority of that settling on the ocean floor where it will never degrade.

3. **The majority of plastic bottles are not recycled.** Eighty percent of the water bottles we buy end up in landfills, the absolute worst place for them to be. That means roughly for every 10 bottles we drink, only two end up in the recycle bin. Our national recycle rate for plastic is only 23 percent, which means we throw 38 billion plastic bottles into landfills a year.