

The Scoop on Single-Use Plastic

El Segundo Environmental Committee



It's been making headlines, but if you missed it...

Our planet is experiencing a single-use plastic crisis!

Let's take a look at what's going on:

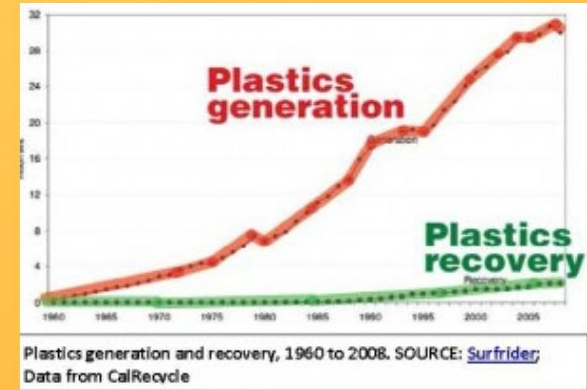


Our society has championed convenience at an ever-increasing rate. Along with that comes waste, often in the form of plastics.

Plastic isn't just in the usual suspects like throwaway cutlery, water bottles, to-go boxes, and straws - it's even found in some tea bags, hygiene products, and synthetic clothing fabrics!



- 8 BILLION TONS of plastic produced since 1950
- Only about 9% of all plastics are actually recycled
- 4.8 to 12.7 million tons of plastic enter ocean yearly
- Annual Plastic Use Per Person
U.S.: 176 lbs, Europe: 132 lbs, India: 4.4 lbs
- Recycling markets are unstable, changing, and collapsing. Western countries used to ship their plastics to faraway places like countries in Asia, but now they are refusing to become the world's dumping grounds, and materials are often sent back.



Overconsumption of plastic waste finds its way to unideal places like:



Bodies of animals *and* humans



Ballona Creek, Playa Vista, LA



Oceans and rivers



yikes!

When it comes to plastic, there is no "*away*."



When plastics end up in the environment, they don't biodegrade. They continue to break down into smaller and smaller pieces, some invisible to the human eye, aka *microplastics*.

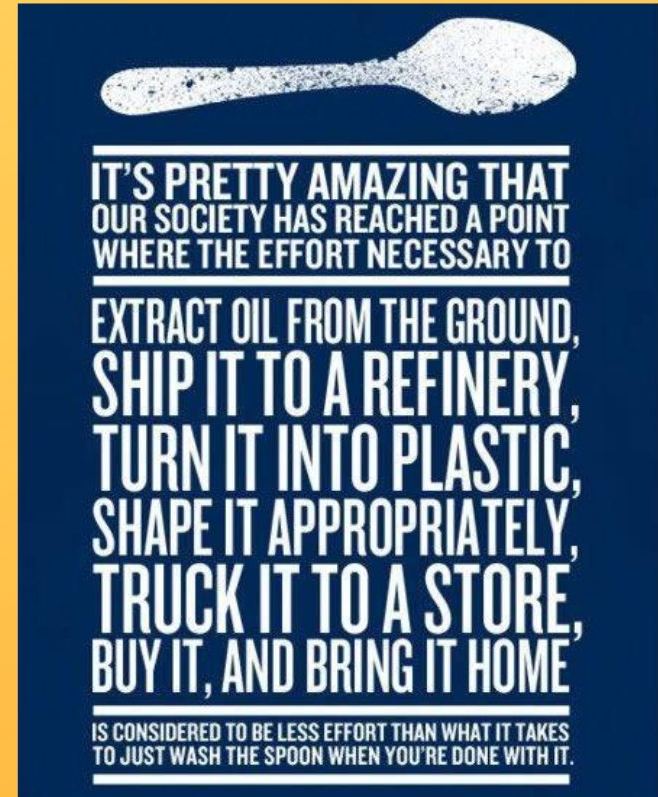
When they become this tiny, they are very easily ingested by animals or end up in other places. Microplastics have been detected in water, salt, beer, and other items we regularly consume. They've even been found in the air, rain, and distant mountains. A recent report wrote that humans consume about a credit card-sized worth of plastics each *week*.

Plastics also accumulate and are vehicles of toxic chemicals, and will release these into water, nature, or our bodies.

That's a lot of intense information! And there are other externalities:

Externalities are hidden or associated costs with a system or material.

Plastics are made from oil. Using disposable plastics continues reliance on the fossil fuel industry, contributing to the climate crisis. This also reinforces an industry that impacts habitat degradation and risky oil spills. Consider the emissions generated to ship the oil to process and then ship the plastic products to stores around the world, to end up tossed in the trash or with a very slim chance of recycling after just *one* use!



What is El Segundo Doing To Help Combat The Single-Use Problem?

"Upon Request" Policy for Single-Use Plastic Straws, Stirrers and Utensils

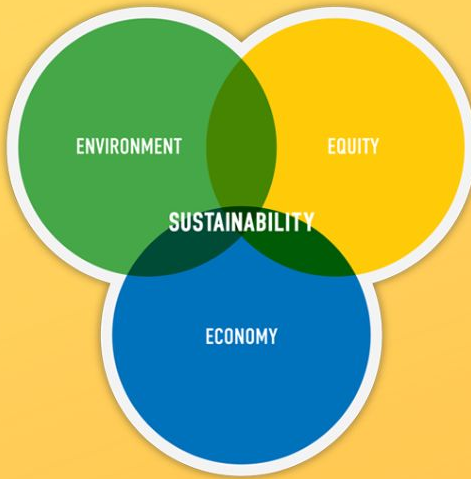
The City of El Segundo and its City Council want to do their part in reducing litter and the use of single-use plastic products which have been found to cause significant environmental harm. On January 21, 2020, City Council adopted an ordinance requiring food and beverage providers in the City follow an "upon request" policy for single-use plastic products. Per this new ordinance, food or beverage providers may not provide single-use plastic straws, utensils or stirrers to a customer, except when the customer requests. *The City will begin enforcing the new ordinance on May 20, 2020.*

***You've Got This!!* Switching to reusables, bulk items, refusing, and reducing can help!**

The best thing you can do is utilize reusables you *already* own! We all probably have a reusable water bottle in a cabinet somewhere. For items you don't have, there are great swaps out there to move away from single-use disposable plastic! Like anything new, it will take intention and practice, but this will become an easy habit in no time!



Feeling stuck or need more specific tips? Get in touch with the ES Environmental Committee and we'll be happy to point you towards ideas and solutions!



Reach out to the El Segundo Environmental Committee for more information, tips, and other green topics!

**Visit our page on the city's website for resources and contact information:
www.elsegundo.org/government/departments/public-works/environmental-resources-and-committee**

This presentation was based on the City of Manhattan Beach's plastics education packet, and we would like to thank and acknowledge them for sharing the information with us!