



April 3, 2024

Dear Senators and Representatives,

Plastic pollution is everywhere and it is harming our waterways and wildlife. That's why we're seeking your support for the Plastic Pellet Free Waters Act (S. 2337, H.R. 7634), which stops the dumping of plastic nurdles into our waterways.

Nurdles are tiny plastic pellets that form the raw material for plastic manufacturing. Because nurdles are small, cheap and easily contaminated, they're often dumped by plastics manufacturers or spilled during transport.¹ In the United States, clean water organizations and volunteers have documented pellet dumping and spills in Texas,² South Carolina,³ Pennsylvania⁴ and beyond. A study of 66 beaches in the Great Lakes region found 60 percent contained nurdles.⁵

Once plastic enters our waterways, it is easy for animals to mistake it for food. Eighty kinds of seabird⁶ and every species of sea turtle⁷ have ingested plastic, and concentrations of microplastics have significantly increased in freshwater fish in the Chicago region.⁸ Animals who eat plastic can starve to death, and plastic pellets can also absorb toxic chemicals including DDT, PCBs, and mercury.⁹

Plastic pellets are extremely difficult to clean up once they reach our waterways, and often polluters are not held accountable. One example: In Louisiana, 743 million pellets were spilled from a container ship in the Port of New Orleans. It took weeks to begin clean-up while agencies and companies debated who was responsible, by which point a local expert estimated as many as 75 percent of the pellets had already swept downstream.¹⁰

We need to protect clean water and put wildlife over waste. The Plastic Pellet Free Waters Act would do just that by banning the dumping of plastic pellets into our waterways.

Congress must act before the problem gets any worse. Pellets dumped into our waterways are contaminating the streams and rivers Americans enjoy for fishing, swimming and recreation, and an estimated 10 trillion plastic pellets enter the ocean each year.¹¹

We urge you to support the Plastic Pellet Free Waters Act to protect our beloved waterways and put wildlife over waste.



Signers by state (alphabetical list follows):

National

Clean Water Network
Environment America
Environmental Integrity Project
Environmental Law & Policy Center
Environmental Working Group
Open Water
Plastic Pollution Coalition
Surfrider Foundation
U.S. PIRG
Waterkeeper Alliance

CALPIRG

Environment California

Colorado

Glen Canyon Institute
CoPIRG
Environment Colorado

Connecticut

ConnPIRG
Environment Connecticut

International

Only One

Delaware

Beaver Valley Preservation Alliance

Alabama

Black Warrior Riverkeeper
Cahaba Riverkeeper

Florida

Friends of St. Sebastian River
Kissimmee Waterkeeper
Nature Coast Conservation
St. Johns Riverkeeper
Environment Florida
Florida PIRG

Alaska

Cook Inletkeeper
Alaska Environment

Arizona

Environment Arizona

Georgia

Satilla Riverkeeper
Savannah Riverkeeper
Georgia Interfaith Power and Light
Georgia River Network
Ogeechee Riverkeeper
Science For Georgia
2050 Pictures, Inc.
Environment Georgia
Georgia PIRG

Arkansas

Arkansas Ozarks Waterkeeper

California

Humboldt Waterkeeper
Orange County Coastkeeper
The Last Plastic Straw



Idaho

Snake River Waterkeeper

Illinois

Alliance for the Great Lakes
Climate Reality Chicago
Environment Illinois
Organizing for Plastics Alternatives
Illinois PIRG
Seven Generations Ahead
Triveni Institute
Bright Beat
Committee on Environmental Protection &
Energy (City of Chicago)
Friends of the Chicago River
Go Green Glen Ellyn
Go Green Vernon Hills & Lincolnshire
Go Plastic Free
John G. Shedd Aquarium
Schaumburg Monarch Initiative
Climate Reality Project - Chicago Metro
Chapter
Green Dolphin Project Global

Iowa

Environment Iowa
Iowa PIRG

Louisiana

Atchafalaya Basinkeeper
Healthy Gulf (Gulf Restoration Network)
Micah Six Eight Mission

Maine

Environment Maine

Maryland

ShoreRivers
Maryland PIRG
Montgomery Countryside Alliance
Potomac Riverkeeper
Environment Maryland

Massachusetts

Massachusetts Rivers Alliance
Environment Massachusetts
MASSPIRG

Michigan

Freshwater Future
Environment Michigan
PIRGIM

Minnesota

Friends of the Mississippi River
CURE
Environment Minnesota

Missouri

Missouri Confluence Waterkeeper
MoPIRG
Environment Missouri

Montana

Environment Montana

Nevada

Environment Nevada

New Hampshire

New Hampshire Environment Energy &
Climate Network Plastic Working Group
NH Network
NH Network Plastics Working Group



NHPIRG

Reed Family Trust
Environment New Hampshire
Unitarian Universalist Society of Laconia

New Jersey

Hackensack Riverkeeper, Inc.
NJPIRG
The Watershed Institute
Environment New Jersey

New Mexico

Environment New Mexico
NMPIRG

New York

Seneca Lake Guardian
Environment New York
Grassroots Environmental Education
WESPAC Foundation, Inc.

North Carolina

MountainTrue
Environment North Carolina
NCPIRG

Ohio

Environment Ohio
Lake Erie Foundation
Lake Erie Waterkeeper
Ohio PIRG

Oregon

Tualatin Riverkeepers
Environment Oregon
OSPIRG

Pennsylvania

Phoenixville Green Team
Presque Isle Audubon
Protect PT
RiverWise
Sustainable Pittsburgh
Three Rivers Waterkeeper
Wetlands & Ecology, Inc.
Women for a Healthy Environment
Lower Susquehanna Riverkeeper Association
Mountain Watershed Association
Allegheny CleanWays
Breathe Project
Climate Reality: Pittsburgh & Southwestern
PA Chapter
Havertown Area Community Action
Network (H-CAN)
PA Jewish Earth Alliance
PennEnvironment
PennPIRG
Allegheny County Clean Air Now (ACCAN)
Beaver County Marcellus Awareness
Community (BCMAC)
Center for Coalfield Justice
Clean Air Council
Community Partners in Asthma Care
Grounded Strategies
UCWC Social Justice Committee
Warrior Trail Association of Greene County
Pennsylvania
Lower Merion Conservancy
Rail Pollution Protection Pittsburgh (RP3)
Susquehannock Trail Club

Rhode Island

Environment Rhode Island
RIPIRG



South Carolina

Charleston Waterkeeper
Coastal Carolina Riverwatch
Environment Oregon

Texas

Turtle Island Restoration Network
Tennessee Riverkeeper
Bayou City Waterkeeper
San Antonio Bay Estuarine Waterkeeper
Environment Texas
Fenceline Watch
Texas Conservation Alliance
TexPIRG
Texas Campaign for the Environment

Virginia

Environment Virginia
Lynnhaven River NOW (LRNow)

Washington

Environment Washington
Puget Soundkeeper
Twin Harbors Waterkeeper
WashPIRG

Wisconsin

Milwaukee Riverkeeper
Wisconsin Environment
WISPIRG



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Bayou City Waterkeeper
Beaver County Marcellus Awareness
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Beaver Valley Preservation Alliance
Black Warrior Riverkeeper
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ConnPIRG
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CURE
Environment America
Environment Arizona
Environment California
Environment Colorado
Environment Connecticut
Environment Florida
Environment Georgia
Environment Illinois
Environment Iowa
Environment Maine
Environment Maryland
Environment Massachusetts
Environment Michigan
Environment Minnesota
Environment Missouri
Environment Montana
Environment Nevada
Environment New Hampshire
Environment New Jersey
Environment New Mexico
Environment New York
Environment North Carolina
Environment Ohio
Environment Oregon
Environment Rhode Island
Environment Texas
Environment Virginia
Environment Washington
Environmental Integrity Project
Environmental Law & Policy Center
Environmental Working Group
Fenceline Watch
Florida PIRG
Freshwater Future
Friends of St. Sebastian River
Friends of the Chicago River
Friends of the Mississippi River
Georgia Interfaith Power and Light
Georgia PIRG
Georgia River Network
Glen Canyon Institute
Go Green Glen Ellyn
Go Green Vernon Hills & Lincolnshire



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Lake Erie Foundation
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NCPIRG
New Hampshire Environment Energy & Climate Network Plastic Working Group
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WESPAC Foundation, Inc.
Wetlands & Ecology, Inc.
Wisconsin Environment
WISPIRG
Women for a Healthy Environment

Footnotes

1. Ashleigh Deemer, "What are nurdles?" *PennEnvironment*, Oct. 16, 2023, <https://environmentamerica.org/pennsylvania/articles/what-are-nurdles/>.
2. Naveena Sadasivam, "Millions of plastic pellets in Lavaca Bay? Formosa says it's just 'trace amounts'" *Texas Observer*, Feb. 4, 2019, <https://www.texasobserver.org/millions-of-plastic-pellets-in-lavaca-bay-formosa-says-its-just-trace-amounts/>.
3. *Charleston Waterkeeper and South Carolina Coastal Conservation League v. Frontier Logistics, L.P.*, Dec. 14, 2020, <https://casetext.com/case/waterkeeper-v-frontier-logistics-lp-1/>.
4. "PennEnvironment, Three Rivers Waterkeeper sue Styropek USA to stop plastic pollution," *PennEnvironment*, Dec. 5, 2023, <https://environmentamerica.org/pennsylvania/media-center/pennenvironment-three-rivers-waterkeeper-sue-styropek-usa-to-stop-plastic-pollution/>.
5. Patricia L. Corcoran et al, "A comprehensive investigation of industrial plastic pellets on beaches across the Laurentian Great Lakes and the factors governing their distribution," *Science of The Total Environment*, Vol. 747, 141227, Dec. 10, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2020.141227>.
6. Chris Wilcox, Erik Van Sebille, and Britta Denise Hardesty, "Threat of plastic pollution to seabirds is global, pervasive, and increasing," *PNAS*, Vol. 112 No. 38, Aug. 31, 2015, <https://www.pnas.org/doi/10.1073/pnas.1502108112>.
7. Emily M. Duncan et al, "Microplastic ingestion ubiquitous in marine turtles," *Global Change Biology*, Vol. 25, Issue 2, pp. 744-752, Dec. 4, 2018, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gcb.14519>.
8. Loren Hou et al, "A fish tale: a century of museum specimens reveal increasing microplastic concentrations in freshwater fish," *Ecological Society of America*, Vol. 31, Issue 5, Mar. 01, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1002/eap.2320>.
9. See Deemer.
10. Jacob Wallace, "When plastic pours into the Mississippi, who's responsible?" *E&E News by Politico*, Sept. 29, 2020, <https://www.eenews.net/articles/when-plastic-pours-into-the-mississippi-whos-responsible/>.
11. Neel Dhanesha, "The massive, unregulated source of plastic pollution you've probably never heard of," *Vox*, May 6, 2022, <https://www.vox.com/recode/23056251/nurdles-plastic-pollution-ocean-microplastics>.