



PIRG staff call on Amazon to reduce plastic at a Valentine's Day event at its headquarters in Seattle. Credit: Ricky Osborne

## BEYOND PLASTIC

# We're calling on Amazon to reduce *more* plastic packaging

With more and more packages being shipped every day, the amount of plastic packaging waste is rising rapidly.

Often unrecyclable, this plastic goes to landfills, and like plastic bags, pollutes the environment and community.

PIRG is campaigning to reduce the amount of plastic packaging and plastic waste in America. We're urging Amazon and other companies to recognize the amount of plastic they use and seek more sustainable alternatives.

### More Amazon packages are shipped than ever before

Each year, Amazon's Prime Day sells a record number of items. In 2023, customers bought more than 375 million items. The company

broke that record again in 2024, selling more items than any Prime Day in history.

However, each item sold has to be shipped, and that means individual plastic packaging for hundreds of millions of items.

How big is this problem? According to a report by Oceana, the plastic waste generated by Amazon's plastic shipping pillows in 2020 could circle the Earth 800 times.

This plastic comes from bags, envelopes and packaging pillows meant to cushion the item. Amazon shipments also produce waste in other ways, such as emissions from shipping vehicles and promotion of wasteful tech that doesn't last.

**GO PAPERLESS!**  
Sign up for the latest U.S. PIRG news, updates and alerts sent directly to your inbox at: [pirg.org](http://pirg.org).

*Continued on page 2*

WINTER 2025

Thanks  
for making it  
all possible

## AMAZON PLASTIC PACKAGING CONT.

Staff



*Despite the reduction in air pillows, there's still more Amazon can do to reduce its plastic packaging.*

### Some of Amazon's plastic packaging is not recyclable

Recyclable materials have been an important part of Amazon's marketing strategy. Every blue and white bubble-lined bag used to have a recycling symbol. However, that symbol could be misleading.

Recently, Amazon updated some of their plastic blue and white bags to show that they are, in fact, not recyclable.

Additionally, plastic Amazon packaging that is made to be recycled often ends up in the trash anyway. PIRG's Truth in Recycling investigation placed trackers in Amazon plastic packaging and sent them to drop-off locations designated by Amazon's partner, How2Recycle. The investigation showed that out of 93 bundles of plastic that were sent to the drop-off locations, only four made it to recycling centers that handle plastic. Most packaging went to incinerators or landfills, or were made into nonrecyclable products.

### Help call on Amazon to use less plastic

It's clear that recycling Amazon plastic packaging is a failure, and that the company should take steps to minimize the plastic waste that flows out of its business.

PIRG's campaign for less plastic waste has made an impact. Recently, Amazon announced that it will phase out its plastic pillows by the end of 2024, getting rid of a wasteful and unnecessary feature of its shipping practices. Acknowledging that its plastic bubble-lined bags are not recyclable is a step in the right direction.

But much more can be done. Too much of Amazon's single-use plastic packaging still ends up as waste, polluting our homes, communities and environment. Amazon has eliminated its single-use plastic delivery bags across Europe to comply with the European Union's stricter regulations, which means it's possible for Amazon to do the same here.

PIRG is calling on Amazon to get rid of single-use plastic packaging, reduce the enormous amount of plastic that the company produces and switch to recyclable, sustainable alternatives. Already, thousands of supporters and members like you have sent a message to Amazon to ask it to reduce its plastic waste. If you haven't yet added your voice, you can add your own message at [pirg.org/amazon](https://pirg.org/amazon).

## NEWS BRIEFS

### HEALTH CARE

#### Medicare drug price negotiation could result in dramatic savings for patients

New negotiated prescription prices from the Biden administration could help save Americans billions across the board.

On Aug. 15, the Biden administration announced new prices for 10 costly and widely used prescription medications. These include medications for diabetes, psoriasis, heart failure, certain blood cancers and other conditions, which are taken by roughly 8.8 million older Americans.

Taking effect in 2026, these new prices will save Medicare patients \$6 billion every year. These lower prices will help alleviate the problems of the high cost of prescription drugs, and save money for both the individuals who need these drugs and the tax-payer funded health care program.

"Let's celebrate the first set of new lower prices for common costly medications that patients rely on to live productive, healthy lives," said Patricia Kelmar, PIRG's health care campaigns senior director. "We won the right for the government to negotiate prices with the drug companies so we can both help patients and be good stewards of our federal tax dollars that support Medicare."

#### OUR MISSION

PIRG is an advocate for consumers, advancing solutions to problems that affect our health, our safety and our well-being.

Learn more about us by scanning the QR code below:



## NEWS BRIEFS

### SPACE WASTE

#### New report highlights pollution problems caused by skyrocketing number of satellites

Since 2019, over 7,000 new internet satellites have begun creating mega-constellations in our night sky. However, these satellites have a lifespan of only five years. According to “WasteX,” a report from the U.S. PIRG Education Fund released on Aug. 8, decommissioned satellites can pose a serious environmental issue.

Launching a satellite already releases pollutants from burning rocket fuel. When it’s decommissioned, the satellite is left to fall into the atmosphere and burn up, which could damage the ozone layer, spread gasses and smoke and launch dangerous debris. At peak deployment, 29 tons of metal could fall into the atmosphere every day.

PIRG, along with 120 top astronomy researchers, is calling on the Federal Communications Commission to make sure low Earth orbit satellites go through environmental review.

“We’re in a short window of time when we can prevent making a mess of space and our atmosphere rather than spend decades cleaning it up,” said Lucas Gutterman, director of PIRG’s Designed to Last campaign and author of WasteX. “The new space race doesn’t need to create massive space waste.”

### CONSUMER WATCHDOG

#### ‘Trouble in Toyland 2024’ reveals imported dangers for kids

Buying toys online has never been easier. But assurances that products meet safety standards, especially when they’re from overseas, can be lacking. PIRG’s Trouble in Toyland 2024 report covers these dangerous toys, and more.

Toys bought online from international e-commerce websites or apps often slip through inspection at the border. The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) reports that 1.6 million dangerous or illegal toys were confiscated by the CPSC in collaboration with the U.S. Customs and Border Protection in fiscal year 2024, with potentially many more going unnoticed.

Uninspected and untested products can have serious risks, including being made with toxic



KOLO

materials or small parts that could cause choking hazards.

*Teresa Murray talking about the findings of our Trouble in Toyland report on ABC.*

However, unsafe toys from overseas aren’t the only potential problem. The Trouble in Toyland 2024 report covers not just overseas toys, but also water beads, recalled toys, smart toys and other dangerous products marketed to children.

“While so many toys are made safer today, new threats have emerged,” said Teresa Murray, Consumer Watchdog for PIRG and author of Trouble in Toyland 2024. “By examining the problems and offering tips to shoppers, we want to help people avoid toys that could endanger their children’s health and ruin their holidays.”

HELP PROTECT HIS FUTURE  
WITH YOUR INVESTMENTS



[www.greencentury.com/divestbecause](http://www.greencentury.com/divestbecause)



Distributed by  
UMB Distribution  
Services, LLC. 11/21

U.S. PIRG  
Membership Services Office  
1543 Wazee St., Ste. 460  
Denver, CO 80202  
(303) 801-0582

PRSRTP NOPROFIT  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
ACUPRINT

# U.S. PIRG

CITIZEN AGENDA • WINTER 2025



**TOP STORY: We're calling on Amazon to reduce more plastic packaging**

PIRG is urging Amazon and other companies to recognize the amount of plastic they use and seek more sustainable alternatives.

## GET THE LEAD OUT

# We got a huge commitment to get lead out of service lines

A decade after the Flint, Michigan, water crisis, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) had finalized a rule to replace lead pipes over the next 10 years, but dropped the ball when it comes to schools.

We've known for a long time that lead causes serious health issues, especially for young children. Lead, which comes from 9 million pipes that have yet to be replaced, can negatively affect how kids think, learn and behave, with effects that may last their entire lives.

On Oct. 8, the EPA finalized a rule requiring the full replacement of lead pipes in the next 10 years. This is a big step towards ridding our communities of lead pollution. However, the rule does not include halting widespread lead contamination in schools, a major oversight when it comes to clean drinking water for children.



Ten years after the Flint, Michigan, water crisis, the EPA has taken the most significant step toward protecting our drinking water from lead.

The work's not done. Thanks to your support, we've helped secure the most significant step towards protecting drinking water in a decade, and will continue to push for safe drinking water in schools. To help PIRG continue the campaign to Get the Lead Out and safeguard school drinking water, check out our website.

## FEATURED STAFF



Kimball Nelson

**Faye Park:** As president of PIRG, Faye oversees our national campaigns to protect consumers and enable Americans to lead healthier, safer and more secure lives. Faye began her public interest career as a student volunteer with MASSPIRG Students at Williams College, and then later worked with the Student PIRGs in California on campaigns to promote recycling and to help students register to vote.

USDA photo by Lance Cheung, Public domain

Printed on recycled paper