

MILLION
ACTS OF BLUE



A TOOLKIT FOR A PLASTIC-FREE FUTURE

**A call on people around the world to create actions to
push retailers, corporations and businesses to reduce
single-use plastic**

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THANK YOU FOR DOWNLOADING A MILLION ACTS OF BLUE: A TOOLKIT FOR A PLASTIC-FREE FUTURE!

**PLASTIC
POLLUTION
IS EVERYWHERE,
AND WE NEED
EVERYONE**

We have all seen the heartbreaking images of beaches covered with plastic waste and animals' stomachs full of it. It's easy to feel overwhelmed and frustrated that in our daily lives we are surrounded by single-use plastic products without alternatives. Our efforts to reduce our own plastic footprint and recycle are admirable and important, but often plastic straws, bags, bottles, and packaging are pushed on us before we have a chance to refuse, or we need products that are only offered packaged in plastic. **We operate in a broken system, it's clogged with plastic, and the people controlling the machine won't turn it off!** The good news is that together we can fix it. And here's how we are going to do it.

Greenpeace, alongside numerous other organizations in the #BreakFreeFromPlastic movement, is campaigning globally to stop the plastic pollution problem at its source – the corporations that have created it and the governments that are failing to regulate it.

**WE BELIEVE IN A
WORLD THAT'S
FREE OF SINGLE-
USE PLASTICS,
AND WE ARE
UNITING TO BUILD**

There is a growing movement of people who are rejecting the old narrative that throwaway plastics are unavoidable and it's up to individuals to make changes in their daily lives to solve the plastic epidemic. Instead, **we are joining together through a Million Acts of Blue, for our beautiful blue planet, to create the real change we need to secure a plastic-free future that is healthier for our families, our communities and the species that call this planet home.** We are holding companies accountable, urging governments to take strong action, and championing a lifestyle that reconnects us to each other and to the beauty of the planet we are working to protect.

**WHAT IS AN
ACT OF BLUE?**

Turning the tide on plastic pollution by taking action to stop single-use plastic from being created in the first place. Inspired by love for our amazing blue planet and the urgent need to protect our oceans, waterways, landscapes and communities.

We are excited that you have joined us and look forward to supporting you in the change you will be making in your corner of the world.

LEARN, SHARE
AND JOIN

ACTION
#1



LEARN



SHARE



JOIN

Sometimes when we are passionate about an issue we think that everyone must know about it. One way to make sure that's true is to share your knowledge and encourage others to join you in your Act of Blue for a Plastic-Free Future, or take action themselves!

Whether you are a teacher, student or concerned individual wanting to learn more about plastic pollution and share that knowledge, we have prepared some resources to help you give a presentation to inspire your students, peers or community to join the plastic-free movement. In this section you will find: facts and information; 2 powerpoint presentations; hand-out materials; and tips on how people can take action.

If you want to host an event to bring people together to talk about this issue, you can find some tips below for good resources to use and things to keep in mind for event planning and promotion.



LEARN



OVERVIEW OF THE PROBLEM

Plastic pollution is plaguing every corner of our blue planet. From the deepest part of our oceans, to remote forest paths, from Arctic ice to local riverbanks and island turtle nesting beaches, our throwaway culture is destroying our environments. Too much throwaway plastic is being produced and only a small fraction of what is produced is actually reused or recycled. Once in a landfill or the environment, plastic will not naturally degrade. Instead, it absorbs other toxic chemicals, breaks down into tiny pieces, and creates widespread pollution or enters the marine food chain through ingestion by wildlife. It has even been found in sea salt, drinking water and beer! Millions of tonnes of plastics enter our oceans every year, and unless we stop the flow of plastic at its source, we may approach a point of no return for the planet.

Corporations have been allowed to mass produce and promote rampant consumption of single-use products for years, and governments are not doing enough to hold them accountable. Corporations continue to skirt responsibility for the products they sell, placing the responsibility back on their customers, communities impacted by plastic pollution, and wildlife.

[Key facts and information ▶](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions ▶](#)



SHARE

There are many ways that you can share information with your audience about plastic pollution. You could give a speech providing some key facts and telling a story about how you became inspired by this issue, give a powerpoint presentation with images and information presented on slides to captivate your audience, host a discussion providing some prompt questions based on the information provided above, or show a film that captures the main plastic pollution issues you want people to learn. Just do whatever option makes you the most comfortable and best fits what will motivate your audience!

Two powerpoint presentations are provided below. One is for a younger audience, age 12 or under, and the other is for an older audience, age 13 and up. You know your audience best, so choose the presentation that resonates the most with you. We have also included a link to a downloadable poster and bookmark that can be used to promote your event and provide something for participants to take home with them.

To download and edit these presentations click "File" at the top left of the page, and then choose "Download" from the drop-down menu, the downloaded file can then be edited. Thanks for inspiring others with your act of blue!

[PPT for 12 and under](#)

[PPT for 13 and up](#)

[Click here](#) for a downloadable poster

[Click here](#) for a downloadable
bookmark to hand out to participants



SHARE

ORGANIZE A PLASTIC-FREE FUTURE FILM SCREENING

Film screenings can be a great way to increase people's knowledge and awareness of an issue, in an enjoyable and non-confrontational way. If you are already part of a Greenpeace local volunteer group, it's also a great way to recruit new people and make connections with other local organisations and individuals.

Steps for organising a successful film screening

1. **Choose the film.** Choosing the right film is important because it should reflect the messages about the problem and solutions you want to communicate to your audience, or at the very least not contradict them. Depending on the audience you want to attract, you may want to choose a film based on what you think would resonate. There are a growing number of plastic-related films and documentaries to choose from including: [A Plastic Tide](#); [Smog of the Sea](#); [From the Waste Up](#); or the recent popular Our Blue Planet episode from [Blue Planet II](#). If you are hosting a small group you do not need to worry about seeking permission from the film maker but if you plan to host a large group and/or collect cash for admission, you should check the terms of the film to ensure you have the right go-ahead.
2. **Choose a venue.** Find a venue, pick a date and pencil it in. Get a quote on cost. Pick a date at least a month ahead to give yourself plenty of time to promote your event. If you're hosting a smaller gathering in your home or community space, then don't worry about as much notice.
3. **Get equipment.** If the venue doesn't provide them, source and cost projection equipment and speakers (good sound is important). You could see about a microphone but that depends on how big the space is and the acoustics.



SHARE

4. **What's your budget?** Once you have a sense of costs, decide if this will be a free event, or if you will be charging to cover expenses. Free events are more accessible, yet might require more advance planning in order to access free venues and equipment.
5. **Promote, promote, promote.** Create PUBLIC event pages on Facebook and [Greenpeace Greenwire](#), and be sure to share through all possible online platforms you are connected to. Tweet and email everyone you know. Posting posters on notice boards can also be a great way to spread the word.
6. **Reach out to Greenpeace.** Don't forget to tag Greenpeace Canada on social media so we can share your event!

Tips and next steps

Planning and promotion

- If possible, get an organising team together and decide who will be responsible for what: e.g. venue, set-up, tear-down, poster design, promotion, minding the door, etc.
- Agree who will introduce the film and decide if you want to invite someone to give a talk or host a discussion after the film, i.e. someone associated with the film. Although in person hosts and guest speakers are always best, you can always bring in people over Skype/video conferencing if you are comfortable with the technology. Advance notice is key when inviting hosts and guests to participate!
- Know yourself and your team's capacity. Give yourselves enough time to plan and promote to succeed!
- Ask for a discount when booking venues and hiring equipment – you'd be surprised how often this works.
- If charging for entry to pay for the costs of the event, there are ticket websites that can be used and you can add a link to your event pages on Facebook and Greenwire so people can easily buy their tickets online.



SHARE

- When creating an event on Greenwire make sure it is PUBLIC. As the 'creator' of an event, you can use the 'manage enrollments' section to email people who have RSVP'd to the event. Be sure to thank them for signing up, and send updates and reminders about the event as the date approaches. If selling advance tickets, include the 'buy tickets' link in your emails and within the Greenwire event post.
- Share the event on Facebook or Twitter and encourage others in your group to do the same. For large events you could also see if the film maker would share through their networks to help promote by sharing your posts.
- Ask group members to invite friends and family.
- Get someone in your group to design a poster to use online and offline.
- Put up posters in the venue, in local cafés, pubs, libraries, community centres, etc.
- Invite other grassroots or community groups. Invite anyone you can think of and advertise anywhere you can think of.
- Contact local media and ask them to promote your event – asking for a retweet on Twitter can be a quick and easy way to do this.
- Watch the DVD or video file or link in advance to make sure it's not faulty. If possible, test it using the actual equipment you will use, to avoid technical problems on the night.
- If you are hosting a discussion afterward, be sure to check in with any hosts and guest speakers to get on the same page about content, timing and other expectations.

On the night

- Get there early and make sure you have helpers to do various things including managing the door, greeting people, mingling, and selling snacks.



SHARE

- If you have materials, set up an info table to engage with guests.
- Ask people to sign in when they arrive - it's a good idea to have a laptop or tablet on hand to do this digitally. Better yet, ask them to sign the [Greenpeace pledge for a plastic-free future](#) when they arrive!
- Before starting the film, be sure to have someone welcome your guests, and introduce the film. If appropriate to your region, please do an Indigenous land acknowledgment.
- After the film, don't forget to thank people for coming. Encourage them to sign Greenpeace's pledge and tell them about *A Million Acts of Blue: A Toolkit for a Plastic-Free Future*, and invite them to like the [Greenpeace Canada on Facebook](#) to stay informed about the campaign and to join an online community.
- If you are part of a Greenpeace local group or are thinking of starting one, tell them about your vision and goals and when the next meeting/event is.



JOIN

In addition to raising awareness about the plastic pollution crisis and solutions, a great outcome for bringing people together to talk about an issue or watch a film is to inspire them to action. You have people's attention, so make the most of it by seeing who is interested in leading their own Act of Blue for a plastic-free future.

Wrap your event by noting the various ways that participants can get involved.

Suggested actions that kids can take

1. Create a Plastic-Free Future group in your school or with friends and family
2. Ask a parent to sign Greenpeace's petition and download the toolkit to see what things you can do with your family or friends
3. Do a video as a class or with friends about what you plan to do to help stop plastic pollution

Suggested actions that teens and adults can take

1. Sign Greenpeace's pledge at greenpeace.ca/plastic
2. Share what you learned and a link to the pledge on your social media with #BreakFreeFromPlastic #MillionActsOfBlue
3. Talk to your friends and family about creating a Plastic-Free Future group in your community



JOIN

After the event, staying connected

- Send a follow-up email to everyone who came, and thank them again for coming. Provide links to the plastic pledge and toolkit, and flag any other important local dates.
- **Keep us posted!** Please let us know how it went by [completing the survey](#) and sending an email with photos to actsofblue.ca@greenpeace.org
- **Spread the word on social media!** Get someone to post a blog, video or photos from the event to social media using the #BreakFreeFromPlastic and #MillionActsofBlue hashtags.
- **Tackle another section of the toolkit!** Inspired to do more? Download another section and be in touch with how we can support you in another Act of Blue!

Other groups taking action on plastic

Check out our allies in the movement at
www.breakfreefromplastic.org/

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GREENPEACE



**SEND A LETTER
TO THE EDITOR,
SHARE YOUR MESSAGE
THROUGH MEDIA**





SEND A LETTER TO THE EDITOR, SHARE YOUR MESSAGE THROUGH MEDIA

Traditional media such as newspapers, TV, magazines, as well as digital media and radio remain some of the best options for reaching large numbers of people.

Submitting a letter to the editor

Submitting a letter to the editor of your local newspaper can be an effective way to share information with other people in your region or to call a particular notable aspect of an issue to people's attention. Here are some tips!

- **Start with the local press.** You are more likely to see your letter published in the local press than national so identifying a popular local or regional paper would be a good place to start. Consult the website for the requirements on submitting a letter before you proceed.
- **React to the news.** Newspaper editors like to receive letters related to current news, so if you see something placed about plastic pollution or a related topic, put the odds in your favour by responding quickly. For example, if government officials make an announcement about an initiative tackling plastic pollution, you could submit a letter that calls on the government to take concrete action and set ambitious reduction targets. If a company announces a plastic policy with false solutions, you could submit a letter that calls on the CEO to take real action by phasing out single-use plastics. Make sure to reference the article in your letter.



- **Magazines are great options.** Many magazines also have letter to the editor sections. If you want to reach a certain audience, like parents who read a parenting magazine and might be feeling frustrated at how difficult it is to shop plastic-free for their kids, explore a magazine that you know is popular and see when their next publication date is.
- **Keep it short.** Ideally, a letter to the editor should contain between 200-250 words. That's pretty short, so it's important to get straight to the point. [Here is a sample letter](#) * that can give you an idea of the length and approach and you can find [some key messages here](#) to help you form your own.

*To download and edit this document click "File" at the top left of the page, and then choose "Download" from the drop-down menu, the downloaded file can then be edited.

- **Raise interest.** The most important thing you can do to attract readers' attention is to have a catchy title. The title should make a reader want to know more. Then organize your letter to give a clear understanding of the topic you are addressing and the solution or action you are proposing. It's also useful to provide a website where people can find more information.
- **Don't give up.** Even if your letter is excellent, it may not be published because another subject is monopolizing media attention or because the paper received a significant number of letters that day. Persevere! The more often you write, the better chances you have of being published. Try your luck with a different outlet if needed!



Your letter was published? Congratulations!

- **Keep us posted!** Please let us know and send the link or a photo of your article to actsofblue.ca@greenpeace.org and fill out [our survey](#).
- **Spread the word on social media!** Share your article on social media and add the hashtags #MillionActsofBlue and #BreakFreeFromPlastic.
- **Tackle another section of the toolkit!** Inspired to do more? Download another section and be in touch with how we can support you in another Act of Blue!

Calling an open-line show on the radio

With radio, like with print media, it is important to catch the news when it's happening and respond quickly. With more and more media covering plastic pollution and related topics, there are more opportunities to help reframe the public conversation to focus on the real source of the problem and the real solutions. Here are some things to consider.

- **Determine the purpose of your call.** Do you want to react to a recent government announcement or the release of a new study on plastic pollution? Is your purpose to inform listeners how to take action and join the movement? Or both?
- **Write your key messages in advance.** The key to being a good spokesperson is to prepare, and ideally memorize, two or three key messages. An advantage to being on the radio is that you can refer to written copies of those messages when you call in. Some examples of [key messages can be found here](#).
- **Practice before you call.** It's good practice to practice! Saying your messages out loud is different than having a discussion in your head, even better is if you have someone to practice with. Practicing helps ensure you are comfortable with the subject and will give you confidence.



- **Take notes on what has already been said.** This will allow you to build on and respond to what other speakers have said, without repeating them.
- **Stay calm and focused.** Remember to speak slowly, articulate and most importantly... breathe.

Your interview is over? Well done!

Keep us posted! Please send us the link to the program you participated in by writing to us at actsofblue.ca@greenpeace.org and fill out our [survey](#).

Spread the word on social media! Share your interview on social media and add the hashtags #MillionActsofBlue and #BreakFreeFromPlastic.

Tackle another section of the toolkit! Inspired to do more? Download another section and be in touch with how we can support you in another Act of Blue!

Other groups taking action on plastic

Check out our allies in the movement at www.breakfreefromplastic.org

Photo credit: © Daniel Müller, The 5 Gyres Institute, Chanklang Kanthong, Greenpeace

A woman with dark hair tied up in a bun is smiling and carrying a large, heavy sack filled with plastic waste. She is wearing a bright orange long-sleeved shirt, a light blue patterned vest, and dark blue jeans. She is wearing red high-top sneakers. The background shows a modern glass building, a tall stone column, and some steps leading up to a monument. The sky is blue with some clouds.

HELP CREATE PLASTIC-
FREE SUPERMARKETS

ACTION
#3



HELP CREATE PLASTIC-FREE SUPERMARKETS

Supermarkets large and small are a hub for single-use plastic sales. In most grocery or big-box stores it is nearly impossible to avoid products in plastic packaging, making it difficult to make plastic-free choices. We are conditioned to think that our fruit and veg need to be wrapped in plastic for sanitary and protective reasons, even though nature already thought of that and we wash our produce before we eat it anyway. While many people have joined the bring-your-own-bag movement, single-use plastic bags still line the produce aisles and check-out counters around the world, and that's only one example of the numerous single-use plastic items offered.

Many people have had enough and are calling not only for plastic-free aisles, but for plastic-free shopping experiences. Zero waste markets are popping up around the world and recently Iceland, a major supermarket chain in the UK, vowed to stop selling its own brand products in single-use plastic. More and more companies are offering their drinks or products in reusable or refillable containers and bulk food is starting to make a resurgence. Progress is being made but **we need the major supermarket chains and more grocers to act to reduce their plastic footprint to create the scale of change needed.**

Supermarket managers and executives are constantly listening for what their customers do and do not want. Sharing your desire for your supermarket to go plastic-free can help provide the incentive they need to move in the right direction.



There are many different ways to influence your local grocer or a major supermarket chain. You could send the manager or CEO an email, hand deliver a letter to the store manager or the company's headquarters, set up a meeting with the manager or a company executive, send them a message through social media by tagging them, or if they are not receptive to your request, you could increase the pressure on them by starting a petition or visiting a store to take direct action.

What do we want supermarkets to do?

1. Create a single-use plastic reduction policy and transition plan that includes social responsibility considerations
2. Phase out single-use plastic packaging (e.g. plastic bags, products like plastic bottles, sachets, etc.)
3. Invest in reusable packaging and new delivery systems
4. Extended Producer Responsibility - Take full responsibility (social and environmental) and demand the same of suppliers, for the entire lifecycle of the product and its packaging.
5. Increase transparency by measuring and reporting on plastic reduction and waste production and undergoing audits.



Getting started

Once you have determined the local store or supermarket chain you want to change, some internet or in-store research will be needed to figure out who the decision-makers are. Who you talk to will depend on the size and style of the chain. If it's a smaller, independent store you might want to see if you can speak directly to the owner, whereas for a large chain you might focus on the store manager to start, and wait to involve the CEO if the manager does not seem interested in taking action. An internet search can often yield the necessary information, but email addresses are not always easily available so you can either use the general information email address to request the name and contact information for the right person or call or visit a store to determine the individual in charge.

Sending an email or writing a letter

Whether you are sending an email or writing a letter, the most important thing is to be clear about what you are requesting. Are you writing to request a meeting? Are you writing to express your concern and urge action? Are you writing to hear what the store's policy is on single-use plastic and waste reduction? Is it all of the above? The most effective letters not only express concern but also request a response in some form to help gather information and begin a dialogue.

Here's a general outline for an email or letter

- Why are you sending the email?
- What is your concern or what is the problem?
- What do you propose the company does about it?
- How is the company going to address your concern?
- Thank them for their attention to this issue.



What is your concern or what is the problem?

If you would like to use some facts about plastic pollution to help inform your contact about the urgency of the situation and their role in helping to solve it, you can consult the fact sheet found [here](#). You may even be able to find information online about how much waste the company produced or any stats, depending on whether a corporate social responsibility report is released annually or if an environmental organization has already done some scoping. If not, those are questions that you can ask in your email, letter or in-person communication.

What do you propose the company does about it?

This is where you make a clear ask or set of asks to the company. What can the company do to address the problem of plastic pollution and what can the person you are writing to do, specifically. Supermarkets can take various immediate steps to reduce their reliance on, and sales of, single-use plastic. The asks are outlined above and you can find some [key messages here](#) that help to provide context. For an initial email or letter, it is important to provide enough information to inspire the person to act while also not providing so much so as to overwhelm them. Remember that the person you are contacting has many responsibilities to balance, like we all do, so being courteous and to the point can go a long way.

How is the company going to address your concern?

This is the part of the email or letter where you request to meet them to discuss the matter further and request their plans to address the problem. If the email or letter is to a CEO, a meeting may not be immediately possible or possible at all, but you can always ask. And if you do not get a response, do not give up: persistence can yield results!



Delivering a letter

One way to take a next step if you do not receive a response or receive one that addresses your concerns, is to pay a store a visit. And when it comes to getting the attention of a business, in person is usually the best option. Stop by the store and ask for the manager. If the manager is not available and you want to leave your letter, make sure your contact information is on the letter and ask for the person's email address so you can follow up to ensure they received it.

Setting up and preparing for a meeting

First things first, make an appointment. Store managers and company executives are busy people — make an appointment so they will have time to talk to you. Once the meeting is secured, **prepare for what you want to say.** Ensure you have any supporting information with you that you can refer to if need be. Writing down some key points you would like to make and questions you would like to ask can help you feel more comfortable. Providing background information to the person you are meeting with is always a good idea so they can get a clear understanding of the problem you would like them to tackle. **Have a clear ask.** Prepare to leave the meeting having achieved your outcome and determine in advance what that is. **Avoid false solutions and rabbit holes.** Don't try to talk about things you are not clear on. It's an easy trap to get into but there is nothing wrong with saying you will look into something and get back to them. False solutions, like those found [here](#), may be something the person you are meeting with has considered, is acting on or has heard about, so be clear about what are the solutions from your perspective and avoid those that are not.

Be aware of your body language and tone. Being genuine, fair and open-minded can help build trust and rapport, and ease the other party if they feel nervous. Don't be all business, but be professional. Speaking to the person as a person and respecting their space to talk, ask questions and be contemplative is important in building the relationship. The



person you are speaking with may not have all the answers, or all the decision-making ability, so be mindful of what that person brings with them to the conversation. **Once you've had the meeting**, write a thank you note or email and recap any commitments made or next steps. Even if the meeting did not go the way you wanted, this is an important step in building the relationship, creating a dialogue and showing the person that you respect their time even if you do not respect their current single-use plastic purchasing decisions!

Start a petition

There are various tools that can be used to create a petition. Some popular ones are listed below and they provide tips on how to make your petition successful. Just like writing an effective letter or email, make sure what you want the company to do is clear and you pull from the asks outlined above. For petitions, targeting the CEO or local store owner is often a great way to get a company's attention. Once it is created make sure to share it widely on social media and ask your friends to do the same. Once you have a solid number of signatures, consider how you will deliver the petition. There are many ways that you can do that whether through email, by printing off the signatures and including them in a hand-delivered or mailed package, or in combination with a visit to the store with other concerned people to create more attention.

www.change.org/start-a-petition
www.thepetitionsite.com/create-a-petition.html
www.ipetitions.com/

Target through social media

With online shopping and social media remaining popular, many companies are engaging their customers online. One way to get their attention is by posting a question or call to action on social media and tagging the company you want to take action. Whether a tweet, Instagram post or Facebook post, making it clear what the company is doing wrong and what they can do instead is key, a task that is



easier on Facebook than it is in limited characters through Twitter. A picture is worth a thousands words so if you are in your local store, staring some single-use plastic in the face, take a snapshot and share it to social media tagging the company with your ask for them. Be sure to tag it with #BreakFreeFromPlastic!

Take action at stores

If you have reached out to the company, tried to or have succeeded in meeting with them and are still not seeing a commitment to action from them? Taking direct action can be an effective option. [Join Greenwire](#) or contact us at actsofblue.ca@greenpeace.org to learn more about how you might get a company's attention or how to support Greenpeace campaigns focused on supermarkets in different countries.

You've made progress with your supermarket? Awesome!

- **Keep us posted!** Please send us information about the outcome at actsofblue.ca@greenpeace.org or by filling out [our survey](#).
- **Spread the word on social media!** Share any positive commitments or developments made by your supermarket and add the hashtags #MillionActsofBlue and #BreakFreeFromPlastic.
- **Tackle another section of the toolkit!** Inspired to do more? Download another section and be in touch with how we can support you in another Act of Blue!

Other groups taking action on plastic

Check out our allies in the movement at

www.breakfreefromplastic.org

Photo credit: © Dennis Reher, Fred Dott, Peter Caton, Mitja Kobal, Argelia Zaczatzi, Greenpeace

GREENPEACE



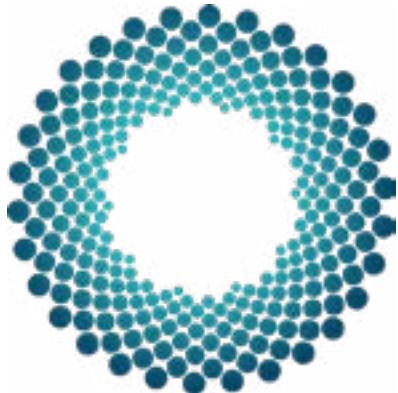
A waiter with short brown hair and a tattooed neck and arms, wearing a white t-shirt and a dark apron, is smiling while holding a large black plastic crate filled with various types of fresh tomatoes. He is standing in front of a building with a large mural of a face. In the background, there's a street with other people and buildings.

**GET RESTAURANTS
AND CAFES TO DITCH
SINGLE-USE PLASTICS**

ACTION
#4



GET RESTAURANTS AND CAFES TO DITCH SINGLE-USE PLASTICS



A growing movement is urging fast-food chains, restaurants and cafes around the world to step up and lead by no longer offering their customers single-use plastic items as an option. Elimination of single-use plastics like straws or cups from popular pubs and cafes equates to avoidance of plastic waste and serves as a point for education and discussion about plastic pollution and the need for local businesses and corporations to take the lead on reduction solutions.

Many of us frequent coffee shops or cafes, and our favourite restaurants on a weekly or even daily basis. From a local popular spot to a big chain, getting a business to take leadership on single-use plastic reduction can create a domino effect of plastic-free action. Don't underestimate the power of getting even one spot to change — you can use it to encourage or pressure other businesses to follow suit and create single-use plastic-free neighbourhoods! **All businesses can, and must, reduce their throwaway plastic footprint, and we can help them see the value in doing so.**

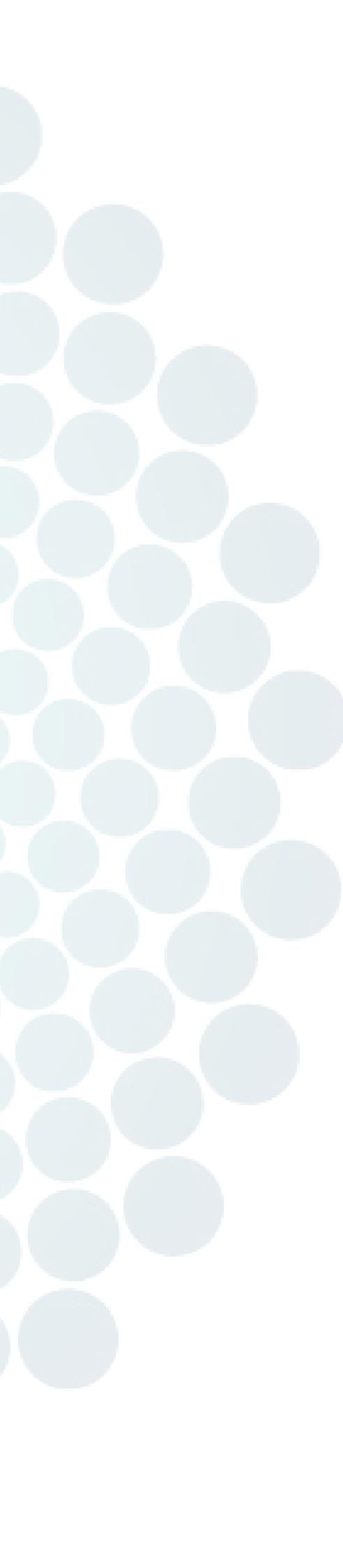
CASE STUDY

A Greenpeace local group in Winnipeg, Canada, led a '[Straw Upon Request](#)' campaign in their city as part of [Plastic Free July](#), and brought many local businesses into the fold. In total, 40+ businesses participated, pledging to stop giving out plastic straws by default to their customers. Not only only that, these businesses also agreed to educate their customers by placing promotional information about the campaign on every table. The campaign was widely successful and the group made some big waves in their province. Read their media advisory [here](#) and check out [some fab news coverage](#).



Some tips for getting started

1. **Goals and the 'ask'.** Identify the main goal of your campaign, and create a [one-pager](#) that you can give to businesses to explain your campaign and provide background information. Be sure to have a clear ask when you approach them. Do you want them to remove all single-use plastics? Are you able to get them to start with coffee cups or straws? Single-use plastics that they may have on offer include:
 - plastic utensils
 - plastic straws
 - plastic to-go containers
 - plastic-lined coffee cups and lids
 - plastic drink stirrers
 - plastic takeout cups
 - polystyrene/styrofoam
 - plastic bags
 - plastic food packets (e.g. Ketchup)
2. **Schedule a meeting time.** Call or drop in and ask to make a time to meet with the appropriate person. Business managers are busy people and prefer to be able to schedule meeting times.
3. **Practice your pitch.** Don't worry if you're worried about your public speaking prowess - people tend to respond to passion and authenticity, rather than perfection. Here are some [talking points to help you craft your pitch](#). Here's a [sample pitch](#).
4. **Provide background and information!** This is where the [one-pager](#) will come in handy. This gives the person you're meeting with the ability to take the information away and think about it. Not everyone will be convinced on the spot. If they say they're not interested, be sure to thank them for their time and leave them with a smile and your contact info just in case they change their mind.

- 
5. Avoid false solutions! Avoid suggesting alternatives that might not be any better. Check out the [list of false solutions](#) in the facts section. *It's important to promote reuse or avoidance, as a way to decrease waste and tackle the problem of throwaway culture.
 6. **Focus on solutions.** In your pitch, briefly outline the problem, but focus on the opportunity to be part of the solution.
 7. **Support and give props to participants.** Offer businesses resources like posters for their windows, flyers to be placed at the counter or '[table toppers](#)' to help them explain the initiative to their customers. Proposing that they have their [sign-on letter](#) displayed is another option for promotion. Be sure to offer ways to celebrate businesses' involvement in the campaign by highlighting them in a blog or web content or through social media. Local restaurants and cafes may be more interested in joining a campaign to reduce SUPs if it's perceived as beneficial to their brand or profile, and if their efforts are publicized to existing and potential customers.
 8. **Find existing 'leaders' and start with 'early adopters'.** Before you launch the official campaign, seek out existing businesses who have already made the changes you are asking others to make. Use them as examples of 'leading businesses' in your pitch. Approaching businesses you think will be 'early adopters' like smaller, local cafes can help build momentum. Similarly, start by approaching venues that you have a pre-existing relationship with, or that you know will be responsive to change such as businesses that already have some sort of environmental or sustainability focus. You can help build your confidence in talking about the campaign and bring others on board.
 9. **Contact community influencers.** Look for other local community engagers and influencers that are important to local businesses such as school green clubs, local politicians or local radio hosts to help promote the campaign!
 10. **Don't get discouraged!** Not every business is going to want to come on board straight away. It's possible they will get on board as your campaign grows and when they see their competitors joining or their customers start asking for no SUPs.
 11. **Make it a media moment.** If you're having success with your campaign, it's worth sharing the news. Here are some tips on how to get [media attention for your campaign](#).



You got some businesses to stop selling single-use plastic? Amazing!

- **Keep us posted!** Please send us information about the outcome at actsofblue.ca@greenpeace.org or fill out our [survey](#).
 - **Spread the word on social media!** Share any positive commitments or developments made by businesses and add the hashtags #MillionActsofBlue and #BreakFreeFromPlastic.
 - **Tackle another section of the toolkit!** Inspired to do more? Download another section and be in touch with how we can support you in another Act of Blue!
- * Please note:** Files are editable after they have been downloaded.

Other groups taking action on plastic

Check out our allies in the movement at
www.breakfreefromplastic.org

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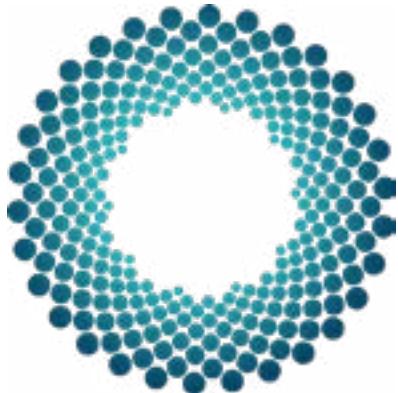
NO PLASTIC

**LOBBY FOR A SINGLE-USE
PLASTIC BAN IN YOUR
TOWN OR BEYOND**

ACTION
#5



LOBBY FOR A SINGLE-USE PLASTIC BAN IN YOUR TOWN OR BEYOND



When people think of lobbying they might think of industry-paid lobbyists, but every constituent has a right to share their opinion. Lobbying is an effective strategy to influence the opinion, and gain the support, of elected officials at all levels of government. Successful lobbying can involve an investment of time and commitment to developing a relationship with your elected official to find common ground and gain their support on an issue. Lobbying can also involve mobilizing others to share messaging, garner media, and bring more attention to an issue. You may choose to engage in either type of lobbying, or a combination of both, depending on your time and resources.

Important things to remember when lobbying

- **Have concise and consistent messaging with a clear ask.** Don't beat around the bush. Make your lobbying asks clear and phrase them as direct requests. Don't assume elected officials know how to respond appropriately to public awareness campaigns or popular support for social movements, so tell them what they need to do, and why they should do it.
- **Take advantage of 'media moments'.** Media interest in popular issues, like plastic pollution, provides leverage to exert political pressure on elected officials. When media are hungry for an issue it's the perfect time to engage with your representative



and reinforce that public support is strongly for (or against) and awareness is widespread.

- **Giving credit is important.** Congratulate your representative for things their party is doing well, or when they do something that supports your ask – like making a public statement or supporting a bill, etc.
- **Plan long-term, national goals; ask for relevant, local commitments.** While it's important to not lose sight of long-term national (and international) goals, lobbying for local, relevant commitments can help prime your representative to support broader, national policies.
- **Persevere when the topic dips in popularity.** Regulatory processes can be cyclical and lengthy, and it's important to still be lobbying when decisions are being made, so don't give up lobbying when an issue has lost public heat.

Building a relationship for effective lobbying

Who are they, what have they supported, and what are their party's policies?

Digging for background information about your representative will help you lobby them more effectively. Their party may not support your issue, but perhaps your elected official has a history of voting in favour of environmental initiatives, or has an affiliation that indicates they may be more receptive to your issue than others. Can you frame your request in a way that makes it more appealing to them?

- **Visit their official government page.** Every elected official nowadays has an official site with their profile. A quick google search should yield lots of information.



#breakfreefromplastic

- **Check the news.** Has your representative been in any media stories relevant to plastics pollution? Check national and local media sources.
- **Find them on social media.** Search for your representative on Twitter and Facebook to 'follow' them and also see how they are engaging with the public and on what issues.

I've done my research, now how do I "lobby" my representative?

Set up a meeting

Meeting your local representative and having regular contact will help build the rapport you need to be successful. Show up well-informed and ready to build a relationship - this will get you further than approaching your representative confrontationally. Here's how to get the most out of your meeting.

- **Make an appointment.** Find out when your representative is available and book a meeting. Depending on what level of government they have been elected to, this may be easier said than done, but polite persistence is usually effective - don't give up!
- **Create a one-pager.** Leaving information with them can help them think through your ask after you leave. Some facts to inform the creation of a one-pager can be found [here](#). If there is a recent study that has come out supporting your ask or a recent news article, you may want to print that as well.
- **Have a clear ask with concise messaging.** A list of proposed [asks can be found here](#) for your reference.
- **Go in with the intent to build trust and rapport.** If you give the right impression, come across as knowledgeable, reasonable, and passionate, then your representative is more likely to take your re-



quest to heart. Try to find common ground and be open to hearing their position, even if you do not agree with it.

- **Avoid rabbit holes and false solutions.** If you do not know the answer to something, don't get sucked in. It's ok to say you'll share more information after. Stick to your ask and avoid getting sucked into a conversation about false solutions. You can find some of those listed [here](#).
- **Ensure you give them space for questions.** Go prepared to have a conversation not give a lecture. When they ask questions you both can learn something, as their questions often show how they are approaching the issue.
- **Ask meaningful, open-ended questions.** The more they talk, the more you understand their position.
- **Get a clear commitment.** Don't settle for vague promises. Try to get at least a clear next step if they are not prepared to go further. Getting a commitment may take time, so keep the lines of communication open and be persistent!
- **Thank them.** Write a thank you note or email and recap any commitments or next steps.

Going to a meeting as a group?

- Ensure you all have a good understanding of the issue
- Nominate spokespeople for each topic you want to discuss
- Designate someone to take notes during the meeting

Bird-dogging or door-stepping

Bird-dogging a candidate consists of showing up at elected officials' events and asking them questions they might not want to answer, oftentimes on camera to utilize on social media and hold them accountable to afterward. Bird dogging is a powerful tool to get your concerns heard, and force a response about addressing plastic pollution and reduction.

Keep an eye on elected officials' travel schedule by calling their office, subscribing to their party's list or tracking their social media. Political events or meetings can be scheduled with only a day or two's notice, so make sure you have a plan ready to go. Prepare a couple questions in advance that force them to address your ask.

Write a letter or email

Writing a personal letter to a politician is more effective and much more likely to receive a response than a form letter or email. Write a letter to state your concerns and request action, but also remember that taking time to express support, or acknowledge their support, can be as - or more - effective, as criticism. If your representative has supported your cause, a letter to acknowledge that carries a lot of weight and validates their action and continued support. When writing a letter, here are some things to keep in mind.

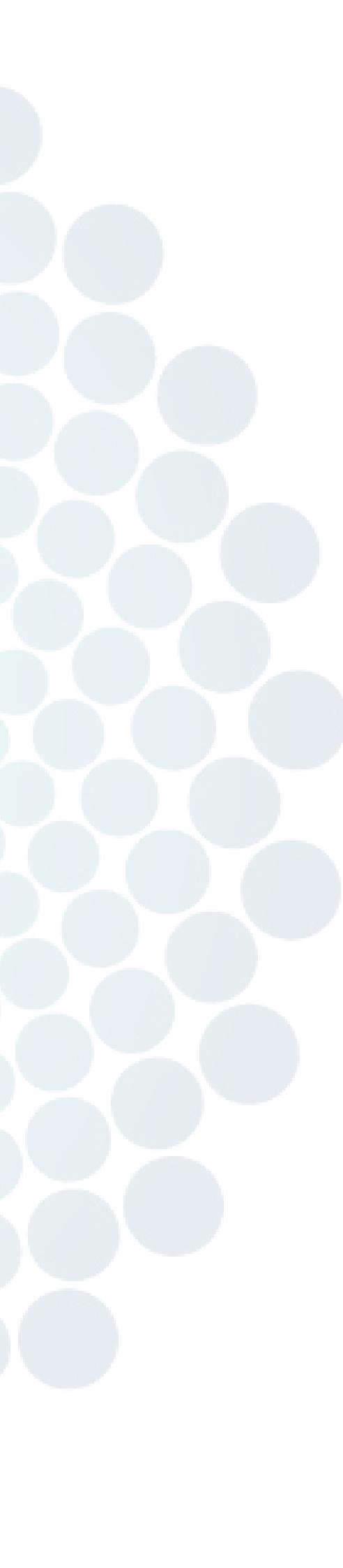
- For letters, use your representative's electorate address for local issues and use their parliamentary address for national issues. Write to the Member of your electorate, and have them pass the letter on to the appropriate Minister.
- For letters, include your address and contact details in the letter header.
- Be sure to identify yourself as a constituent, include your name and address.
- For emails, write to the appropriate politicians, not everyone as tempting as it may be.
- For an email, use the formality of a letter, not the informality typical of emails.
- State the topic in the subject line of your email.
- Have a clear statement of purpose and ask, and be sure to request a response in the form of a letter, a meeting or a phone call.
- Some proposed [asks can be found here](#).
- Thanks is as important as criticism.
- Be polite, it will get you farther! Be courteous, but don't be afraid to take a firm position.
- Personally sign the letter.
- Keep printed and dated copies of all the correspondence between the two of you.
- **Encourage others to write**, the more they hear the same message, the more likely they are to listen. Share your letter or email as a template and encourage people to personalize it. Share your letter with other groups interested in the cause.
- **Host a letter-writing party**. Grab some snacks, get some paper or your computers and write together!
- **Follow up!** Write back to the person thanking them for their response, adding any reminders of your requests and commitments they have made.



Make a phone call or start a phone campaign

A phone call is a quick and relatively easy way to make a personal statement to your representative. It's even more impactful if many people phone about the same topic. Start a phone campaign by asking your friends, family and local community members to call your representative and urge action on plastic pollution. You can broaden your campaign by posting your ask to Facebook or another social media platform. Be sure to provide some background information ([talking points, key facts and info](#)), and your representative's contact information, as guidance on how to find contact info for other representatives.

- If calling about a proposed law, policy or ban, be sure to know the full name of the bill, policy or ban
- Open with a succinct statement and have your talking points written down in front of you. Proposed [asks can be found here](#).
- Give your name and identify yourself as a constituent
- Ask to speak to your representative or their relevant adviser by name
- Ask that your representative take concrete action: supporting or opposing a Bill, having their party change its position, etc.
- If directed to the Minister's office, express that you want your representative to be aware of your concerns and to take the matter up with the Minister and/or their political party
- Be polite and patient, it will get you much farther!
- Follow up with a letter or email



Attend a meeting, debate or town hall

Public meetings are a good forum to raise the profile of the plastics pollution conversation and to focus it on the need for governmental regulatory intervention with producers. Information about these types of events can be found on the elected official's website, on their social media page or at their office. Bringing a friend or family member for support can help make it feel less daunting. Standing at a mic with a large audience can seem overwhelming, so here are a few pointers to help you get prepared.

- **Prepare your question in advance.** You will likely only get one chance to ask it, and only be permitted to ask one question.
- **Don't panic!** Many of the audience members will be grateful to you for asking your question. As one of their constituents, elected officials want to hear from you.
- **Be clear and to the point.** If you want to provide background on why you are asking the question, keep it short so you don't lose people's attention. E.g. My Name is X, I live X and I'm concerned about the plastic pollution crisis because as I have been talking, a garbage truck worth of plastic has entered the ocean. I would like to hear from X.....
- **Stay at the mic until your question is answered.**
- **To prop or not to prop.** You can take advantage of the meeting to raise awareness of the issue by bringing leaflets or a sign or placard, but keep in mind that you are better off using them after you have asked your question and it can create a scenario where the person is less open to dialogue.



Start a petition

Various tools are available to create petitions. Some popular ones are listed below and each provides tips on how to make your petition successful. Be sure to identify who the appropriate target of your petition is and just as with writing letter or email, make sure your ask is clear and that you pull from the [asks found here](#).

Once your petition is created be sure to share it widely on social media and ask your friends to do the same. Once you have a solid number of signatures, consider how you will deliver the petition. Through email? Printing off the signatures and delivering them by hand, or in a mailed package? With a group of other concerned citizens at your representative's office - perhaps with media?

www.change.org/start-a-petition

www.thepetitionsite.com/create-a-petition.html

www.ipetitions.com/

An elected official is supporting a single-use plastic ban? Progress!

- **Keep us posted!** Please send us information about progress you are making or positive initiatives at actsofblue.ca@greenpeace.org.
- **Spread the word on social media!** Share any positive commitments or developments made by your elected official and add the hashtags #MillionActsofBlue and #BreakFreeFromPlastic.
- **Tackle another section of the toolkit!** Inspired to do more? Download another section and be in touch with how we can support you in another Act of Blue!

Other groups taking action on plastic

Check out our allies in the movement at

www.breakfreefromplastic.org

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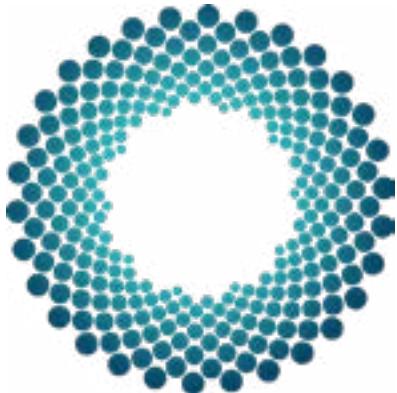
A large pile of plastic waste, including bottles and bags, on a beach.

ORGANIZE A COMMUNITY CLEAN-UP AND BRAND AUDIT

ACTION
#6



ORGANIZE A COMMUNITY CLEAN UP AND BRAND AUDIT



As plastic has increasingly littered communities, riverbanks, parks and beaches, clean-up initiatives have popped up all over the world. Lots of organizations and governments host clean-up days, offering a great opportunity to raise awareness about plastic pollution and its impacts. The organizers of clean-ups often conduct waste audits to determine the types and amount of trash being collected. The results are often tracked yearly. These are usually family-friendly events and people of all ages can participate, creating a fun and motivating atmosphere.

An important element that has been missing from the auditing is the identification of the companies responsible for the trash. Audits can uncover and shine a light on the main branded, throwaway products that regularly contribute to plastic pollution and connect the problem back to the source.

CASE STUDY

In September 2017, key environmental organizations in the [#BreakFreeFrom-Plastic Movement](#) conducted a multi-day waste and brand audit on the beaches of Freedom Island in Manila Bay, Philippines. The location is a Ramsar site and protected area that is a critical marine and bird habitat, but it has suffered extreme plastic pollution due to its location in relation to the Pasig River - one of the world's most plastic-polluted rivers. The results of the audit were shared globally to call on the pollution-producing companies to cut their single-use plastic addiction and stop the flow of throwaway products into our oceans. Brand audits have since been conducted in coastal areas in various other countries such as Indonesia, the U.S. and Spain, and we are gearing up for global audits in 2018. To view the results to date, visit [PlasticPolluters.org](#)!



Through brand audits, #BreakFreeFromPlastic aims to hold polluting corporations accountable, to drive calls for innovations in product packaging and waste management, and to bring people together who want to take action for a future where beach and community clean-ups are a thing of the past.

If you want to host a brand audit in your community, here are some options for you.

1. Download the newly updated brand audit toolkit [here](#) to help you conduct an audit in your community.
2. If you already host or participate in a beach clean with another group, propose adding a brand audit to the initiative. Email actsofblue.ca@greenpeace.org with your plans or the results with pictures.
3. Sign up to lead or join a brand audit by sending an email to actsofblue.ca@greenpeace.org.
4. Create your own event and build a group of people. Get tips on organizing an event, see Action 1, or better yet, join [Greenwire](#) to find other people interested in this issue.

Wrapping up the audit event

1. Share pictures and results from your audits through social media with the location, name of the worst brand offender, hashtags #BreakFreeFromPlastic and #MillionActsofBlue, and tag the name of company or companies that contributed the most trash.
2. Dispose of the trash in accordance with local requirements and in line with the guidelines set out in the toolkit.
3. Encourage participants to sign Greenpeace's pledge at greenpeace.ca/plastic and to download the toolkit to inspire more people to contribute to the Million Acts of Blue for a Plastic-Free Future.

You hosted a fun and successful brand audit and helped identify plastic polluters? Great!

- **Keep us posted!** Please send us information about your event and pictures to actsofblue.ca@greenpeace.org and fill out our [survey](#).
- **Spread the word on social media!** Share the results of your brand audit and pictures by posting a blog, alerting the media or by sharing to social media using the hashtags #MillionActsofBlue and #BreakFreeFromPlastic.
- **Tackle another section of the toolkit!** Inspired to do more? Download another section and be in touch with how we can support you in another Act of Blue!

Other groups taking action on plastic

Check out our allies in the movement at www.breakfreefromplastic.org

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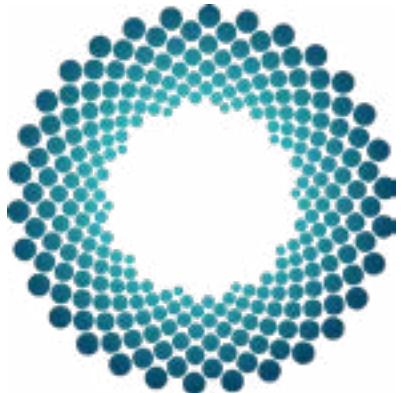


**START A PLASTIC-FREE
FUTURE COMMUNITY
GROUP**





START A PLASTIC-FREE FUTURE COMMUNITY GROUP



To stop plastic pollution at its source, we must build a people-powered movement strong enough to challenge mindsets around throwaway culture and tackle the power of major corporations and governments responsible for producing and enabling the mass production of single-use plastics.

The tactics we've mentioned in this toolkit are great ways to educate and begin to tackle the plastic problem in your communities. But we haven't thought of everything! Making social change takes diversity and creativity, and we'd love you and your friends to come up with your own peaceful tactics.

Do you have big visions and ideas with the practical skills to make them happen?

Do you like to organize and work collectively with like-minded people to make change happen? Maybe you should start your very own Plastic-free-future Community Group or campaign-focused [Greenpeace Local Group!](#)

Don't do it alone! Have you thought about reaching out to your community to make change happen together? This is a great opportunity to connect with like-minded family, friends, and others within your extended community like your school, social network, faith group, sports team, mom group and more.



Have Questions? Need more information to get started?

Join Greenpeace Greenwire!

[Join the Greenwire group](#) - 'Break Free From Plastic' to get news updates and to stay informed on the Greenpeace campaign to end single-use plastics. On Greenwire, you can share ideas, ask questions, and connect with other Greenpeace volunteers and staff working on this issue.

Thinking of starting a group? Let us know!

Keep us posted! Please keep us informed of your plans either through Greenwire or by contacting us at actsof-blue.ca@greenpeace.org so we can help support you in what you may need to get your group started, and further amplify or promote your initiative!

Other groups taking action on plastic

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