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December 11, 2020



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Thanks to [the Plastic Pollution Coalition](#) for their work to address this extremely important and ever increasing danger.

Its an issue that must be faced sooner or later, just as our excessive groundwater pumping.

Read the complete article here in [the Florida Phoenix](#).

Comments by OSFR historian Jim Tatum.

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*– A river is like a life: once taken,
it cannot be brought back © Jim Tatum*

National coalition urges Biden to stop throwaway plastics that kill and injure marine life

By

[Laura Cassels](#)

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December 8, 2020

With plastics pollution rising and recycling in decline, a coalition of 551 environment and health groups called on President-Elect Joe Biden Tuesday to shut down production of throwaway plastics, from single-use water bottles to foam, take-out food containers.

In an eight-point “Presidential Plastic Action Plan” unveiled in

an online conference Tuesday, the Plastic Pollution Coalition urged the incoming administration to stop expansion of plastic production facilities and make use of up-to-date science and technology to assess the safety of plastic products in the environment and for humans.

It also calls on Biden's team to direct the federal government, one of the nation's largest consumers of products, to stop buying single-use plastic items such as disposable water bottles, disposable shopping bags, plastic straws and polystyrene foam containers, and to stop subsidizing producers of plastics. The coalition wants to promote widespread use of reusable and refillable containers, such as cloth shopping bags and durable water bottles.

"President Biden can use today's plan as a blueprint," said Julie Teel Simmonds, senior attorney with the Arizona-based Center for Biological Diversity, adding that Biden and his team have signaled support for the goals. "The petrochemical industry is not taking responsibility but instead is pushing a massive expansion." The coalition, organized under the hashtag #PlasticFreePresident, includes several groups based in or with chapters in Florida, including the Center for Biological Diversity, Riverkeepers, and Surfrider Foundation.

"The problem is getting much worse very quickly," said Oregon U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley, sponsoring legislation to "Break Free From Plastics." "Our planet cannot afford inaction."

Only 8 percent of plastics are recycled, while the rest is burned in incinerators, buried in landfills, or is floating free in the world's oceans, Merkley said.

Angela Howe, legal director of California-based Surfrider Foundation, said 11 million metric tons of plastic waste reach the oceans every year and do not decay there.

Another 12.6 million kilograms of plastic trash is exported to Malaysia, said environmental engineer Jan Dell, founder of Last Beach Cleanup based in California. Each American generates an average about 216 pounds of plastic waste each year, Dell added.

Sharon LeVigne of Louisiana and Dianne Wilson of Texas said plastics plants pollute the air and water of neighboring poor, minority communities in which they typically are built, and the pollution sickens residents, they said.

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Florida, with 1,350 miles of coastlines along the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean, could play a big role in one of the recommendations: to reduce the amount of plastic fishing line and other plastic fishing waste that resides in nearshore waters and often chokes or ensnares marine animals and sea birds.

According to an [analysis by Oceana](#), an ocean-advocacy group, Florida and its neighboring states find plastic trash in more dead and maimed marine animals – chiefly rare manatees and sea turtles – than any other region of the country. Recreational, monofilament fishing line is the top culprit, according to the data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission...



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Veteran journalist Laura Cassels is a reporter, former statehouse bureau chief, and former city editor. She is a

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