

PLASTIC POLLUTION

More than 22 million pounds of plastic pollution end up in the Great Lakes every year. And plastic never really goes away. Instead, it just breaks down into smaller and smaller pieces known as “microplastics.” Researchers have found stunningly high amounts of microplastics in all five Great Lakes. They’ve found microplastics in Great Lakes fish, drinking water, bottled water, and beer. Microplastics have been found in human blood, lungs, stool, and even breast milk.

Substantially reducing plastic pollution will require action from businesses, governments, and manufacturers. Producers should be responsible for the waste they create at all stages of the plastic lifecycle, from production to collection, recycling, and disposal.

Sample candidate questions:

- Do you support legislation that would reduce single-use plastics like foam foodware and plastic shopping bags in our state/community?
- Do you support funding our agencies to monitor our drinking water for microplastics and microfibers?
- Would you support an Extended Producer Responsibility law that would hold manufacturers accountable for the plastic waste they create?
- How would you reduce government purchasing of single-use plastics (for example, changing purchasing practices and using more reusable options)?
- How would you work with communities, businesses, and manufacturers to transition toward fewer plastic-dependent products and less packaging?
- Do you support regulations that allow customers to bring their own refillable containers to grocery stores, beauty care stores, and restaurants?

