

On May 4, New Jersey will take its next steps to Get Past Plastic, as stores and food service businesses trade single-use plastic bags and polystyrene food containers for more environmentally friendly alternatives.

These changes stem from the single-use plastics reduction law enacted Nov. 4, 2020, which is aimed at reducing waste from plastic carryout bags, straws and food containers — items that are not readily recyclable and represent a significant source of litter in New Jersey communities.

Working together, New Jersey residents and businesses can reduce single-use plastics that end up in landfills or incinerators, too often litter our communities and land in our waterways and oceans. As this plastic litter breaks down in our environment, it becomes small particles (known as microplastics) that can infiltrate our water supplies and accumulate in the bodies of fish and marine life, entering the food chain. Studies have found plastics in the guts of sea turtles and seabirds, which can lead to reproductive failure or death for some species. And, removing microplastics from our waterways and drinking water can bring added cost to water systems and customers.

Reducing our reliance on single-use plastics will take some getting used to. But, when we *Bag Up* before hitting the grocery store, Skip the Straw on that next beverage or enjoy some Foam Free takeout, we'll be supporting cleaner communities, healthier waterways, and more vibrant fish and marine life.

Visit [www.nj.gov/dep/get-past-plastic/](http://www.nj.gov/dep/get-past-plastic/) to learn more about efforts by the NJ Department of Environmental Protection, NJ Business Action Center and NJ Clean Communities Council to offer outreach and education about the law.

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**Key Teens: Join in the First-Annual Reduce Single Use  
Video Contest**

NJCCC and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection have partnered up to launch a new video PSA contest for 2022 with this theme: “*Reduce Single Use.*” The contest is designed to encourage greater understanding of the state’s single use plastics law.

This contest challenges middle and high school students to create an original 60-second public service announcement (PSA) video, in English or in Spanish, to promote awareness of how single-use plastics contribute to litter and marine debris, harm the environment, or negatively impact marine wildlife. Students can focus on plastic bags, polystyrene or straws.

The contest is open to students in seventh through 12th grades, and students may enter on their own or as a group.

Winning videos will be highlighted on our websites, [niclean.org](http://niclean.org) and/or [baqupnj.com](http://baqupnj.com), and [njdep.gov](http://njdep.gov) and may be offered for broadcast to NJ TV and cable stations. They will also be used as part of public forums hosted by the NJCCC and NJDEP, and posted to social media.

The submission deadline is Monday, April 1, 2022. Winners will be announced in conjunction with Earth Day, April 22, 2022.

Cash prizes awarded! Learn more at [baqupnj.com](http://baqupnj.com).