



# Our Plastic Problem and our Climate Emergency

- A greater than 50% reduction in bag related global warming emissions can be achieved through a switch from single use bags to reusable carry-out bags.
- Race is the number one indicator for the placement of toxic facilities in this country. Communities of color and low-income communities are often the hardest hit by climate change.
- According to the recent National Climate Assessment and IPCC reports we are in a climate emergency have twelve or so years to stem catastrophic climate change.
- The International Energy Agency found that direct greenhouse gas emissions from petrochemicals would increase 30 percent by 2050, the main driver, plastics.
- Plastics emit the potent greenhouse gases methane and ethylene, when they are exposed to sunlight and degrade.
- Over 20 million pounds of plastics enter the Great Lakes annually.
- Plastic fragments are now found in the waters of St. Louis River and off Park Point impacting fish and fishing livelihoods.
- Duluth beer contains micro plastics
- Studies demonstrate that bag fees have result in 70– 80% reduction in single bag use.
- An average Duluth grocery stores gives out approximately 1.5 million single use carry out bags per year. This amount of money is equivalent to the cost of purchasing 15 reusable grocery bags for every citizen of Duluth every year.
- Our demand for free single use bags carry out bags costs an average grocery store about \$60,000 per year.
- Plastic straws are the largest contaminant in the WLSSD compost facility.
- Americans use 1.6 straws per person a day — most of them ending up in our waterways.
- Straws, plastic bags and Styrofoam tm to go containers are all on the top ten coastal contaminants.
- Less than 5% of standard HDPE plastic bags are recycled in the US, and Styrofoam is not recyclable.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics issued a recommendation to avoid Styrofoam plastics.

The list of cities supporting initiative similar to the Bag it Duluth proposal keeps growing. [Lunenburg](#) and [Boston MA](#) have joined [Damariscotta, Newcastle and Waterville](#) and 17 other Maine communities who have passed plastic bag bans. [Charleston, NC](#) just passed a bag, straw and Styrofoam ordinance. Similarly, the Council in [Long Beach Island, NJ](#) and [Anchorage, Alaska](#) passed similar ordinances. A November ballot initiative citizens in [Chicago voted](#) to support of a ban on plastic straws. [Washington](#) , [Pennsylvania](#), and [New Jersey](#) states may shortly join California in a state ban while the European Union has established a 2020 deadline for the phase-out of single use plastics.