

This Plastic-Free July, Send Your Members of Congress a “Message in a Bottle” Asking Them To Rescue Us From Plastic Pollution!

Join Beyond Plastics in celebrating Plastic-Free July with this fun, creative campaign to help convince your members of Congress to pass the brand-new, highly effective National Bottle Bill.

HOST AN IN-PERSON “MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE” EVENT AT YOUR REPRESENTATIVE’S DISTRICT OFFICE

This is a perfect opportunity to:

- Get great photos and build the potential for news coverage;
 - Guarantee that your message will be heard; and
 - Invite speakers, make signs, and rally for action on plastic pollution.
1. [Sign up to let us know you’re hosting an event!](#) We can help support you and potentially also invite people in your community to join you.
 2. **Choose a date and time for your action.** Avoid overlap with important dates, such as budget votes, holidays (like July 4th or July 4th observed on July 5th) or big events, that will compete for media attention. Allow enough time to plan and promote your event (3-5 weeks).
 3. **Gather your group of organizers.** This can be your zero-waste group, book club, XR chapter, or any other group you work with. Invite anyone you think might like to join you. Ask all participants to bring a [“message in a bottle.”](#)
 4. **Plan your event logistics.** Invite 2-3 speakers who can each talk about different aspects of plastic pollution and the Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act (ocean wildlife, microplastics, health impacts, environmental justice, etc.)

Sample schedule:

- a. 11:45: Gather at District Office - provide chalk to make art and write messages on the office steps/sidewalk while you’re waiting for critical mass to build
- b. 12:00: First speaker, Plastics and Environmental Justice (whoever is recording/streaming the event via Facebook Live should start recording)
- c. 12:05: Second speaker, Plastics and Climate
- d. 12:10: Third speaker, Health Impacts of Plastic Pollution
- e. 12:15: Deliver “messages in bottles” to the office

- f. 12:30: Photo-op of everyone holding signs, followed by a few minutes for people to post the images on social media before gathering up supplies and heading back to work/home

Other considerations:

- Who will bring a bullhorn?
 - Will you provide water and snacks?
 - How is the event accessed? (parking? bus stop?)
 - Can 1-3 people volunteer to make a bunch of signs to bring for others?
 - Who will bring sidewalk chalk?
 - Who will take photos or record the event throughout? Can you livestream it via Facebook?
5. **Invite your Congressional Representative** and/or staff to your event. They may decline but perhaps they'll be excited about it and wish to be involved. And if not, it's just a common courtesy to let them know this is coming and make sure it won't interfere with anything they already have planned.
 6. **Promote your event (a lot)**
 - a. Write an Action Alert with all the information needed to participate in the event. This should be 1-2 pages and include the who, what, when, where, and background information. [See an example of an Action Alert here](#). Distribute the Action Alert far and wide to your email lists and follow up with your contacts.
 - b. Make a Facebook event and invite lots of people to turn out for environmental justice and plastic waste reduction! Share to neighborhood pages, your local paper, Nextdoor, etc.
 7. **Write a media advisory to go out the day before and the morning of the event.** A media advisory is like an Action Alert for the press. [You can adapt from this template](#).

HOW TO PREPARE A MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

Step 1: Find an empty single-use plastic bottle (the 20 fl oz size) and make sure it is clean and dry inside and out. Bonus points if it was littered :)

Step 2: Write your “message in a bottle”. You’re welcome to write your own or use or adapt our [sample message](#).

Step 3: Pack up your message. Roll your message up and place it in the bottle, then screw the cap back on.

Step 4: Address your bottle. Address your bottle using either a piece of paper you tape on the bottle or an adhesive label. Make sure to write your member of Congress’s address clearly (we recommend mailing it to the district office rather than the Washington, DC office as mail there has to go through more stringent procedures and can take a long time to reach them) and be sure to include your return address.

Step 5: Take a photo of your bottle with the message in it.



Step 6: Post your “message in a bottle” on social media with the following message (you can customize your message with your own thoughts and [facts about plastic](#)).

S.O.S! I’m sending a message in a bottle to @RepSenatorXXYYY to rescue us from the #plasticpollution crisis by passing the National Bottle Bill ASAP! . 15+ million metric tons of plastic enter our oceans each year and plastic production is expected to triple by 2050. We must act NOW to stem the tide of #singleuseplastic and slow the #climatecrisis.

Tag Beyond Plastics in your tweet, Facebook post, or Instagram post (we’re @plasticsbeyond on Twitter, @beyondplasticsaction on Facebook and @beyondplasticsbennington on Instagram) and tag your members of Congress along with any friends or other people you think would be interested in your tweet, post or gram (if you run out of space on Twitter, keep in mind that you can tag up to 10 people in your image.)

Include as many of these hashtags as you can fit: #plasticfreejuly #bottlebill #frackedplastic #planetorplastic #wildlifeoverwaste #plasticpollution #climatecrisis #refusesingleuse #zerowaste #reuserevolution #noexcuseforsingleuse #breakfreefromplastic #peopleoverplastic #toxicplastic #plasticplanet. Feel free to add your own favorite hashtags, too, of course.

***If you don't use social media, email a photo of your bottle to Alexis Goldsmith at alexisgoldsmith@bennington.edu and we'll share it via Beyond Plastics.

Tip: Have fun with the message. Below are some short sample messages you can use or adapt.

BONUS: Send all three of your members of Congress a message in a bottle, not just one!

Note: Beyond Plastics supports non-violent, peaceful protest. Our organization will not and cannot partner in any kind of Direct Action or Civil Disobedience.

SAMPLE MESSAGE TO GO IN YOUR BOTTLES

DATE

Dear Senator/Representative_____

S.O.S! I'm sending you this message in a bottle because our planet is drowning in single-use plastic bottles and it's only going to get worse unless you act now.

More than 15 million tons of plastic waste enters our oceans each year, causing untold harm to marine life, interfering with our oceans' ability to act as a crucial carbon sink, and turning our oceans into landfills. The plastics and petrochemical industry plan to TRIPLE plastic production here in the U.S. by 2050. Plastic is a major contributor to and perpetuator of our urgent climate change crisis, too. If we value our children, our environment, and our way of life, we cannot allow this planned expansion to take place.

Please rescue us from the ever-worsening plastic pollution crisis by passing the new national Bottle Bill introduced by Senator Jeff Merkley and Representative Alan Lowenthal..

Single-use plastic bottles are clogging our oceans, rivers, streets, landfills and poisoning our air when they're burned in incinerators. One million plastic bottles are bought around the world every minute and more than half a trillion plastic bottles will be sold this year. But, at best, **less than one third of these plastic bottles will be recycled because only ten states in the U.S. have bottle bills in place.**

In these states, bottle bills have proven to effectively:

- *Reduce the amount of waste sent to landfills and incinerators;*
- *Dramatically reduce litter by at least 40% or more;*
- *Increase beverage container recycling rates significantly;*
- *Conserve natural resources such as timber, water, and minerals;*
- *Save energy; and*
- *Help create new jobs in the recycling and manufacturing industries.*

I urge you to pass the newly introduced national bottle bill without delay.

Thank you for being a leader in protecting our health, our environment, our economy, and our future.

Sincerely,

YOUR SIGNATURE

YOUR NAME

YOUR MAILING ADDRESS

MEDIA ADVISORY

Contact: NAME, PHONE, EMAIL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: DATE

**Constituents to Deliver An S.O.S. Demanding Rescue From Plastic Pollution
Crisis to CONGRESSPERSON in LOCATION on DATE**

Constituents of CONGRESSPERSON NAME (and ANY NOTEWORTHY PARTICIPANTS - optional) will gather at LOCATION on TIME/DATE to deliver an urgent S.O.S. requesting rescue from our ever-worsening plastic waste crisis.

WHAT: SOS message to Congress/Senate to begin to address plastic pollution by quickly passing the National Bottle Bill

WHEN: Date and time (provide the best time for photos, if applicable)

WHERE: Address, location of event and parking directions

WHO: [list of speakers/important people who will be attending the event]

XXYY, title

XXYY, title

XXYY title

WHY: Plastic pollution is a growing global environmental crisis we cannot afford to continue ignoring. At least 15 million metric tons of plastic enter our oceans every year, threatening the health of marine wildlife and ecosystems, disrupting the fisheries humans depend on, and interfering with the ocean's ability to act as a critical carbon sink. The significant greenhouse gas emissions from plastics' production, usage, and disposal hasten climate disaster. Plastic production and disposal create toxic air quality in fenceline communities - a major environmental justice issue. Studies have found that adults are consuming a credit card's worth of plastic each week and microplastics have been discovered in human lungs, feces, and placentas with troubling implications for human health. Federal action is lagging far behind what is needed to address the challenge and Congress must act quickly to pass the new national Bottle Bill introduced earlier this month by Senator Merkley and Representative Lowenthal.

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