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## Writing a Letter to an Elected Official



Writing to your elected officials is an effective way to communicate your concerns to decision makers and advocate for solutions. This tactic can be especially effective when many constituents write letters about the same issue. When writing to your legislator, consider the following:

- Why is this issue important to your community?
- What is the legislator's track record on this issue, if any?
- What are the legislator's priority issues, and how does plastic pollution connect to those issues, if at all?
- What's the one thing you'd like your legislator to take away from this letter?

Additional tips:

- Keep it short.
- Be direct. State your purpose and make sure you clearly state the policy you want the decision maker to champion or support.
- Thank the legislator for taking the time to read your letter, and for any work the legislator has done on the issue.
- Provide your email and phone number so that someone from the office can follow up with you if they have questions or would like additional information.

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**Here's a sample letter or email you can send a local legislator:**

Dear Honorable \_\_\_\_\_ :

As a resident of \_\_\_\_\_ , I am contacting you today to discuss the issue of plastic pollution in our community and the Great Lakes. Our local waterways are an essential part of our local environment and economy. They are too precious to needlessly pollute with plastic. [Insert your ask here. E.g., request a meeting, ask them to support a specific piece of legislation, etc.]

Plastic pollution was once thought of as a problem only for the world's oceans, far from the Great Lakes. However, researchers recently found microplastics, tiny pieces of plastic smaller than 2.5 mm, in the Great Lakes with concentrations as high as 1 million particles per square kilometer, which is a higher concentration than many parts of the ocean. This is significant because the Great Lakes provide drinking water for more than 40 million people. Many of these microplastics are fragments of larger plastic items like plastic beverage bottles, plastic straws, and plastic bags.

Single-use plastic items, which are only used for a short time, can last in the Great Lakes for decades or longer and can be harmful in many ways: they litter our shorelines and beaches, they can be ingested by wildlife, and they can even enter our drinking water. I have seen the impact of plastic pollution when I visit my favorite shoreline park, \_\_\_\_\_ , and I am concerned about the impact it is having on our community.

Communities across the Great Lakes are taking action to stop plastic pollution. Many towns and cities have passed ordinances to reduce the use of single-use plastic, launched public education campaigns on the issue, and stopped using single-use plastic items like plastic water bottles at municipal facilities. [Repeat your ask.]

Thank you for your attention to this issue and your hard work to improve our community. I look forward to speaking with you.

Sincerely,

First and Last Name

Contact Information