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Can You Meet the 60x40 Plastic Reduction Target?



By [Gemma Alexander](#)

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[Earth Day 2024](#), [plastic pollution](#)



Earth Day is the one day each year when everyone stops to think about the environment. Even if you're one of those people who don't think about the environment very often, by now you probably know that plastic is an environmental problem. This

year, Earth Day set a goal to reduce the amount of plastic we all use by 60% before 2040. We can each take steps to reduce our plastic-related impact.

There are so many problems with plastic. Plastic is made from fossil fuel and its manufacture contributes to climate change. Hardly any plastic gets recycled, and a lot of plastic ends up contributing to pollution all around the world. Between [4% and 8%](#) of global oil consumption is related to plastics. In 2015, [plastics manufacturing released](#) as much greenhouse gas as 45 million passenger vehicles. In the United States, only about [5% of plastics are recycled](#) each year, while the rest ends up in a landfill, incinerator, or as litter.

Plastic litter can be found everywhere from [national parks](#) to [giant garbage gyres](#) in the middle of the ocean. The approximate [8 million tons](#) of plastic that enters the ocean each year has some serious [effects on sea life](#). Plastic kills animals from more than [700 different species](#) that ingest or become entangled in it, including at least [1000 sea turtles](#) every year. [Microplastics](#) bioaccumulate in the marine food chain, but seafood is only one source (alongside [chewing gum](#) and [bottled water](#)) of the plastic consumed by humans. Microplastics [have been found](#) in human blood, lungs, and placentas – this last is only one of the reasons that infants are at elevated health risk from plastic exposure [internal link pending].

60x40

For several years, [ending plastic pollution](#) has been a major focus of EarthDay.org's efforts. Although EarthDay.org has advocated for the elimination of plastic, especially single-use plastic, for years, for Earth Day 2024, a new [60x40 plastic reductiOn](#) campaign is setting a clear target for action. Perhaps modeled after the successful international adoption of the [30x30 conservation goal](#), EarthDay's new campaign is demanding a 60% reduction in the production of plastics by 2040, with the ultimate goal of achieving a [post-plastic future](#). The key areas of the campaign include:

- Raising awareness of the [plastic threat to human health](#)
- Advocating for the [elimination of single-use](#) plastic products
- Putting an [end to fast fashion](#), and
- Investing in innovative technologies and alternative materials to [replace plastic](#).

Earth Day Action

If you haven't already, [sign the petition](#) to support the global [plastics treaty](#). The fourth of five rounds of negotiations for the treaty will take place in Ottawa, Canada from April 23-29. At the last round, a minority of mostly fossil fuel-producing nations in an informal "[group of like-minded countries](#)" (including Iran, the

Russian Federation, and Saudi Arabia) did their best to weaken the draft treaty. While at least some of the U.S. delegates [favor a strong treaty](#), America's record on international [environmental treaties](#) is spotty at best. Public support is crucial to U.S. action.

Next, [email your representatives](#) in Congress to support the Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act. Take up EarthDay.org's [#PlasticDetox Challenge](#) and share your plastic swaps on social media using the hashtag #PlasticDetox. [Calculate your plastic footprint](#) and download EarthDay's [Plastic Pollution Primer](#) for understanding the plastic pollution problem and how you can make a difference toward solving it. For a more hands-on Earth Day, join in the [Great Global Cleanup](#) and clean up plastic litter from a beach, park, or riparian area near you.

Personal Plastic Prevention

As they say, Earth Day is every day, so after April 22 keep up your efforts to [become plastic-free](#). Start with [simple changes](#) like mindful shopping and finding alternatives for the single-use plastics that you [use the most](#). Earth911 is a trove of information and resources to help you [eliminate plastic waste](#).

You can support [local plastic bans](#), reduce plastic waste [when you eat out](#) or in [your own kitchen](#), and when you [shop for produce](#) or look for plastic-free [packaging](#) at the grocery store. We've got tips to help you eliminate plastic in the form of [synthetic fabrics](#) (or wear them [more sustainably](#)) and build a more [sustainable wardrobe](#), and even use less plastic when you get a [drink of water](#) or [go to a concert](#) or [take a flight](#). Plastics have infiltrated every aspect of modern life. On the one hand, that makes eliminating them a big job. But it also means that you have lots of opportunities to make a difference.



[Reading time: 3 mins](#)

[Recycling LEGO Bricks: A Sustainable Solution From Brick Recycler](#)



By [Gemma Alexander](#)

Gemma Alexander has an M.S. in urban horticulture and a backyard filled with native plants. After working in a genetics laboratory and at a landfill, she now writes about the environment, the arts and family. See more of her writing [here](#).