



MILLION
ACTS OF BLUE



A TOOLKIT FOR A PLASTIC-FREE FUTURE



Lobby for a single-use plastic ban in your town or beyond

THANK YOU FOR DOWNLOADING **A MILLION ACTS OF BLUE:** **A TOOLKIT FOR A PLASTIC-FREE FUTURE!**

PLASTIC POLLUTION IS EVERYWHERE,
AND WE NEED EVERYONE TO TACKLE IT!

We have all seen the heartbreaking images of beaches covered with plastic waste and animals' stomachs full of it. It's easy to feel overwhelmed and frustrated that in our daily lives we are surrounded by single-use plastic products without alternatives. Our efforts to reduce our own plastic footprint and recycle are admirable and important, but often plastic straws, bags, bottles, and packaging are pushed on us before we have a chance to refuse, or we need products that are only offered packaged in plastic. **We operate in a broken system, it's clogged with plastic, and the people controlling the machine won't turn it off!** The good news is that together we can fix it. And here's how we are going to do it.

Greenpeace, alongside numerous other organizations in the #BreakFreeFromPlastic movement, is campaigning globally to stop the plastic pollution problem at its source – the corporations that have created it and the governments that are failing to regulate it.

WE BELIEVE IN A WORLD THAT'S FREE OF SINGLE-USE PLASTICS,
AND WE ARE UNITING TO BUILD IT.

There is a growing movement of people who are rejecting the old narrative that throwaway plastics are unavoidable and it's up to individuals to make changes in their daily lives to solve the plastic epidemic. Instead, **we are joining together through a Million Acts of Blue, for our beautiful blue planet, to create the real change we need to secure a plastic-free future that is healthier for our families, our communities and the species that call this planet home.** We are holding companies accountable, urging governments to take strong action, and championing a lifestyle that reconnects us to each other and to the beauty of the planet we are working to protect.

WHAT IS AN ACT OF BLUE?

Turning the tide on plastic pollution by taking action to stop single-use plastic from being created in the first place. Inspired by love for our amazing blue planet and the urgent need to protect our oceans, waterways, landscapes and communities.

We are excited that you have joined us and look forward to supporting you in the change you will be making in your corner of the world.



LOBBY FOR A SINGLE-USE PLASTIC BAN IN YOUR TOWN OR BEYOND



When people think of lobbying they might think of industry-paid lobbyists, but every constituent has a right to share their opinion. Lobbying is an effective strategy to influence the opinion, and gain the support, of elected officials at all levels of government. Successful lobbying can involve an investment of time and commitment to developing a relationship with your elected official to find common ground and gain their support on an issue. Lobbying can also involve mobilizing others to share messaging, garner media, and bring more attention to an issue. You may choose to engage in either type of lobbying, or a combination of both, depending on your time and resources.

Important things to remember when lobbying

- **Have concise and consistent messaging with a clear ask.** Don't beat around the bush. Make your lobbying asks clear and phrase them as direct requests. Don't assume elected officials know how to respond appropriately to public awareness campaigns or popular support for social movements, so tell them what they need to do, and why they should do it.
- **Take advantage of 'media moments'.** Media interest in popular issues, like plastic pollution, provides leverage to exert political pressure on elected officials. When media are hungry for an issue it's the perfect time to engage with your representative



and reinforce that public support is strongly for (or against) and awareness is widespread.

- **Giving credit is important.** Congratulate your representative for things their party is doing well, or when they do something that supports your ask – like making a public statement or supporting a bill, etc.
- **Plan long-term, national goals; ask for relevant, local commitments.** While it's important to not lose sight of long-term national (and international) goals, lobbying for local, relevant commitments can help prime your representative to support broader, national policies.
- **Persevere when the topic dips in popularity.** Regulatory processes can be cyclical and lengthy, and it's important to still be lobbying when decisions are being made, so don't give up lobbying when an issue has lost public heat.

Building a relationship for effective lobbying

Who are they, what have they supported, and what are their party's policies?

Digging for background information about your representative will help you lobby them more effectively. Their party may not support your issue, but perhaps your elected official has a history of voting in favour of environmental initiatives, or has an affiliation that indicates they may be more receptive to your issue than others. Can you frame your request in a way that makes it more appealing to them?

- **Visit their official government page.** Every elected official nowadays has an official site with their profile. A quick google search should yield lots of information.



#breakfreefromplastic

- **Check the news.** Has your representative been in any media stories relevant to plastics pollution? Check national and local media sources.
- **Find them on social media.** Search for your representative on Twitter and Facebook to 'follow' them and also see how they are engaging with the public and on what issues.

I've done my research, now how do I "lobby" my representative?

Set up a meeting

Meeting your local representative and having regular contact will help build the rapport you need to be successful. Show up well-informed and ready to build a relationship - this will get you further than approaching your representative confrontationally. Here's how to get the most out of your meeting.

- **Make an appointment.** Find out when your representative is available and book a meeting. Depending on what level of government they have been elected to, this may be easier said than done, but polite persistence is usually effective - don't give up!
- **Create a one-pager.** Leaving information with them can help them think through your ask after you leave. Some facts to inform the creation of a one-pager can be found [here](#). If there is a recent study that has come out supporting your ask or a recent news article, you may want to print that as well.
- **Have a clear ask with concise messaging.** A list of proposed [asks can be found here](#) for your reference.
- **Go in with the intent to build trust and rapport.** If you give the right impression, come across as knowledgeable, reasonable, and passionate, then your representative is more likely to take your re-



quest to heart. Try to find common ground and be open to hearing their position, even if you do not agree with it.

- **Avoid rabbit holes and false solutions.** If you do not know the answer to something, don't get sucked in. It's ok to say you'll share more information after. Stick to your ask and avoid getting sucked into a conversation about false solutions. You can find some of those listed [here](#).
- **Ensure you give them space for questions.** Go prepared to have a conversation not give a lecture. When they ask questions you both can learn something, as their questions often show how they are approaching the issue.
- **Ask meaningful, open-ended questions.** The more they talk, the more you understand their position.
- **Get a clear commitment.** Don't settle for vague promises. Try to get at least a clear next step if they are not prepared to go further. Getting a commitment may take time, so keep the lines of communication open and be persistent!
- **Thank them.** Write a thank you note or email and recap any commitments or next steps.

Going to a meeting as a group?

- Ensure you all have a good understanding of the issue
- Nominate spokespeople for each topic you want to discuss
- Designate someone to take notes during the meeting

Bird-dogging or door-stepping

Bird-dogging a candidate consists of showing up at elected officials' events and asking them questions they might not want to answer, oftentimes on camera to utilize on social media and hold them accountable to afterward. Bird dogging is a powerful tool to get your concerns heard, and force a response about addressing plastic pollution and reduction.

Keep an eye on elected officials' travel schedule by calling their office, subscribing to their party's list or tracking their social media. Political events or meetings can be scheduled with only a day or two's notice, so make sure you have a plan ready to go. Prepare a couple questions in advance that force them to address your ask.



Write a letter or email

Writing a personal letter to a politician is more effective and much more likely to receive a response than a form letter or email. Write a letter to state your concerns and request action, but also remember that taking time to express support, or acknowledge their support, can be as - or more - effective, as criticism. If your representative has supported your cause, a letter to acknowledge that carries a lot of weight and validates their action and continued support. When writing a letter, here are some things to keep in mind.

- For letters, use your representative's electorate address for local issues and use their parliamentary address for national issues. Write to the Member of your electorate, and have them pass the letter on to the appropriate Minister.
- For letters, include your address and contact details in the letter header.
- Be sure to identify yourself as a constituent, include your name and address.
- For emails, write to the appropriate politicians, not everyone as tempting as it may be.
- For an email, use the formality of a letter, not the informality typical of emails.
- State the topic in the subject line of your email.
- Have a clear statement of purpose and ask, and be sure to request a response in the form of a letter, a meeting or a phone call.
- Some proposed [asks can be found here](#).
- Thanks is as important as criticism.
- Be polite, it will get you farther! Be courteous, but don't be afraid to take a firm position.
- Personally sign the letter.
- Keep printed and dated copies of all the correspondence between the two of you.
- **Encourage others to write**, the more they hear the same message, the more likely they are to listen. Share your letter or email as a template and encourage people to personalize it. Share your letter with other groups interested in the cause.
- **Host a letter-writing party**. Grab some snacks, get some paper or your computers and write together!
- **Follow up!** Write back to the person thanking them for their response, adding any reminders of your requests and commitments they have made.



Make a phone call or start a phone campaign

A phone call is a quick and relatively easy way to make a personal statement to your representative. It's even more impactful if many people phone about the same topic. Start a phone campaign by asking your friends, family and local community members to call your representative and urge action on plastic pollution. You can broaden your campaign by posting your ask to Facebook or another social media platform. Be sure to provide some background information ([talking points, key facts and info](#)), and your representative's contact information, as guidance on how to find contact info for other representatives.

- If calling about a proposed law, policy or ban, be sure to know the full name of the bill, policy or ban
- Open with a succinct statement and have your talking points written down in front of you. Proposed [asks can be found here](#).
- Give your name and identify yourself as a constituent
- Ask to speak to your representative or their relevant adviser by name
- Ask that your representative take concrete action: supporting or opposing a Bill, having their party change its position, etc.
- If directed to the Minister's office, express that you want your representative to be aware of your concerns and to take the matter up with the Minister and/or their political party
- Be polite and patient, it will get you much farther!
- Follow up with a letter or email



Attend a meeting, debate or town hall

Public meetings are a good forum to raise the profile of the plastics pollution conversation and to focus it on the need for governmental regulatory intervention with producers. Information about these types of events can be found on the elected official's website, on their social media page or at their office. Bringing a friend or family member for support can help make it feel less daunting. Standing at a mic with a large audience can seem overwhelming, so here are a few pointers to help you get prepared.

- **Prepare your question in advance.** You will likely only get one chance to ask it, and only be permitted to ask one question.
- **Don't panic!** Many of the audience members will be grateful to you for asking your question. As one of their constituents, elected officials want to hear from you.
- **Be clear and to the point.** If you want to provide background on why you are asking the question, keep it short so you don't lose people's attention. E.g. My Name is X, I live X and I'm concerned about the plastic pollution crisis because as I have been talking, a garbage truck worth of plastic has entered the ocean. I would like to hear from X.....
- **Stay at the mic until your question is answered.**
- **To prop or not to prop.** You can take advantage of the meeting to raise awareness of the issue by bringing leaflets or a sign or placard, but keep in mind that you are better off using them after you have asked your question and it can create a scenario where the person is less open to dialogue.



Start a petition

Various tools are available to create petitions. Some popular ones are listed below and each provides tips on how to make your petition successful. Be sure to identify who the appropriate target of your petition is and just as with writing letter or email, make sure your ask is clear and that you pull from the [asks found here](#).

Once your petition is created be sure to share it widely on social media and ask your friends to do the same. Once you have a solid number of signatures, consider how you will deliver the petition. Through email? Printing off the signatures and delivering them by hand, or in a mailed package? With a group of other concerned citizens at your representative's office - perhaps with media?

www.change.org/start-a-petition

www.thepetitionsite.com/create-a-petition.html

www.ipetitions.com/

An elected official is supporting a single-use plastic ban? Progress!

- **Keep us posted!** Please send us information about progress you are making or positive initiatives at actsofblue.ca@greenpeace.org.
- **Spread the word on social media!** Share any positive commitments or developments made by your elected official and add the hashtags #MillionActsofBlue and #BreakFreeFromPlastic.
- **Tackle another section of the toolkit!** Inspired to do more? Download another section and be in touch with how we can support you in another Act of Blue!

Other groups taking action on plastic

Check out our allies in the movement at

www.breakfreefromplastic.org

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