

Preventing Plastic Pollution

Green Century successfully urges companies to reduce plastic waste to protect ocean wildlife and our health.

Problem

- Every 45 seconds, the equivalent of one garbage truck of plastic is dumped into the ocean.
- About 100,000 marine mammals die every year after being entangled in or eating plastic waste.
- Humans face increased risk of cancer, developmental issues, and endocrine disorders from the toxins and microplastics that leach into our water and food.

Green Century's Solution

Green Century works to reduce, reuse and recycle plastic, urging companies to:

- Reduce their use of single-use plastics
- Expand reusable and plastic-free packaging
- Only label plastic as recyclable if it is feasibly recycled in practice

Key Successes

Green Century secured 6 new commitments alone in 2026. These successes followed dialogue, shareholder proposals, and negotiations with Green Century.

Costco - The world's third largest retailer followed through on its commitment to develop and execute a 5-year plan to cut plastic. In 2024, Costco unveiled its plan to reduce plastic packaging by using lighter materials that require less plastic, increasing recycled content, and transitioning to packaging that is more easily recyclable. In 2025 alone, Costco avoided 1.5 million pounds of plastic use through these reduction efforts — the equivalent of enough plastic water bottles, stacked end to end, to wrap nearly halfway around the Earth.



Photo Credit: Willyam, Adobe Stock

Plastic pollution is often mistaken for food by wildlife, putting creatures like fish and turtles at risk. See back side for more examples.



Photo Credit: Monticellillo, Adobe Stock

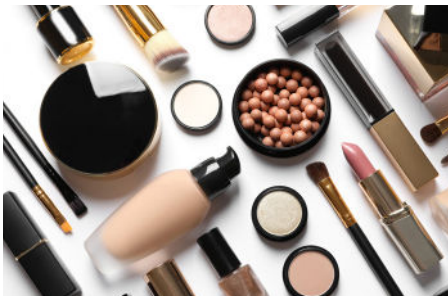


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Mattel - Green Century pressed Mattel, which owns Barbie, Hot Wheels, and Fisher Price brands, to provide more information on how it protects children from the toxic chemicals in its plastic toys and packaging. Several months after Green Century raised these risks directly to management, the company disclosed that it had increased the number of substances it monitors, limits, or does not allow from 3,000 to 15,000.

Royal Caribbean - The world's second-largest cruise ship company, agreed to improve its sustainability disclosures after discussions with Green Century. The company will share how it plans to achieve its goal of launching a cruise ship with net-zero total climate emissions net-zero cruise ship by 2035. The company will also provide information on how it calculates and discloses its use of single-use plastics.

Ulta Beauty - Green Century convinced Ulta Beauty, the largest beauty retailer in the U.S., to disclose its plastic footprint for its own brand packaging in 2026 and set a new sustainable packaging goal. The beauty industry generates approximately 120 billion packaging units annually, of which a large share is plastic waste that can be cut by eliminating excess packaging, switching to non-plastic materials, and expanding refillable options.

Hasbro - Green Century persuaded Hasbro, one of the largest toy companies in the world, to disclose how it assesses and manages instances where the lobbying done by its toy trade associations is misaligned with the company's own policies, including its work to ensure the safety of chemicals in its toys. Hasbro is a member of The Toy Association, which lobbies on issues including the regulation of potentially hazardous chemicals in toys such as Oregon's Toxic Free Kids Act, which it lobbied against.

US Foods - After negotiations with Green Century, US Foods, one of the largest food service distributors in the United States, will provide more information on the sustainability of its disposable products, including the food packaging that it sells to restaurants and food service companies. Specifically, US Foods will disclose what share of its takeout containers are polystyrene, commonly known as Styrofoam, a suspected human carcinogen – and how it will work is working to provide alternatives the material.

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