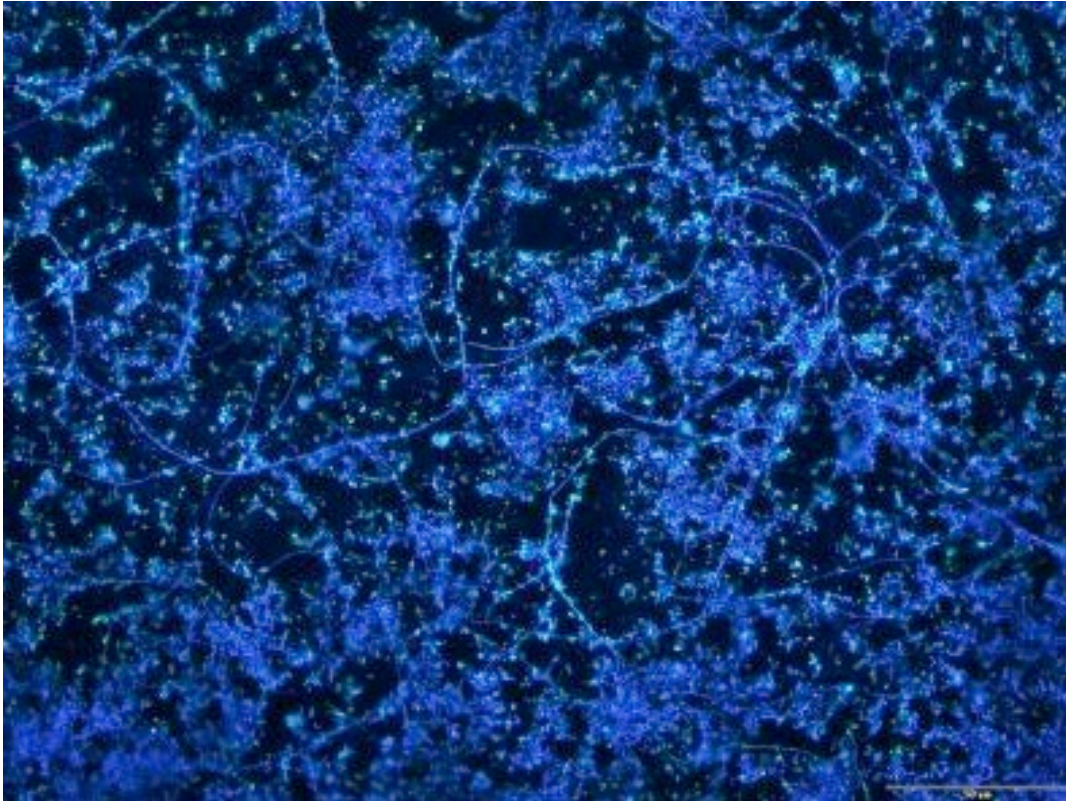


# Catto Fellowship Program



## SECOND NATURE

SUBMISSION TO UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

IN ADVANCE OF THE RIO EARTH SUMMIT

*GLOBAL DECLARATION ON PLASTIC POLLUTION*

# Introduction

## Summary: Global Declaration on Plastic Pollution

For the past 60 years, society has been using plastics in everyday life with little concern or understanding of how to properly dispose of or recycle this material.

Plastic is a valuable, important, and useful material in applications across the value chain, but society must find a more sustainable way to maintain lifecycle responsibility for this non-renewable material so that it does not degrade our land, oceans, and human health.

Between 60 and 80% of marine debris is derived from plastic products. Enormous quantities of plastic are concentrated in the 5 largest gyres of our oceans, with possible grave consequences for the food chain and the human health and certain consequences for the well being of the animals that live in the oceans or rely on the oceans for habitat and food.

In its 2011 Year Book, UNEP identified oceans plastics pollution as "persistent, bio-accumulating and toxic substances", stating that "Research indicates that tiny pieces of plastic are absorbing and concentrating from the seawater and sediments chemicals, from polychlorinated biphenols, PCBs, to the pesticide DDT. [...] Many of these pollutants, including PCBs, cause chronic health effects such as endocrine disruption, mutagenicity and carcinogenicity."

Research indicates that cleaning up the existing stock is simply impossible; the areas are too large and the plastic too small and pervasive. And even if a way to clean up the plastic currently in the oceans was found, more plastic pollution is accumulating daily.

Therefore, bearing in mind the precautionary principle, immediate action is needed to prevent further plastic pollution in the oceans.

There are effective, immediately available options for reaching this result. The key areas of action are: infrastructure (providing the infrastructure to properly collect and recycle the plastic waste), consumer behavior (engaging consumers to reduce demand, recycle, and reuse, as appropriate), regulatory controls, and creation of markets for post-consumer waste. Experience shows that these solutions are effective and with the proper infrastructure in place, recycling rates can double within one year. Within this framework, Extended Producer Responsibility policies appear to be a promising instrument to accelerate the deployment of each of these solutions, particularly in financing infrastructure and involving producers of plastic products and packaging in end-of-life management.

Governments play a central role in mobilizing these solutions: governments can educate and incentivize consumers, help put in place infrastructure, and create markets.

And Governments have by definition a responsibility for protecting the common goods.

Therefore we propose a Global Declaration on Plastic Pollution.

## **Draft Global Declaration on Plastic Pollution**

### **The Challenge**

Whereas, plastic is a valuable, important, and useful material in applications across the value chain;

Whereas, for the past 60 years, society has been using single-use plastics in everyday life with little concern or understanding of how to properly handle this material throughout its entire life cycle;

Whereas, society must find a more sustainable way to handle this non-renewable material throughout its life cycle so that it does not degrade our land, oceans, and human health;

Whereas, the costs to manage and clean up single-use plastics are significant, and do not account for the environmental costs of plastic pollution;

Whereas, the impact of plastic pollution has been particularly significant on our oceans;

### **The Opportunity**

Whereas, there are economically attractive solutions for mitigating global plastic pollution;

Whereas, key opportunities to make impact include: infrastructure, consumer behavior, creation of markets for post-consumer waste, and regulatory controls, these have yet to be widely adopted;

Whereas, governments can play a central role in mobilizing these solutions: regulate single-use plastics, educate and incentivize consumer behavior, create and maintain appropriate infrastructure, and support the development of market mechanisms;

Therefore we propose a Global Declaration on Plastic Pollution.

### **The Action**

We hereby commit to reduce our nation's contribution to the problem of plastic pollution. Specifically, in accordance with precautionary principle we will immediately develop appropriate regulatory controls, market incentives, extended producer responsibility policies for single-use plastics, collection and recycling infrastructure, and other strategies to achieve specific source reduction targets aimed at decreasing the

production of plastic materials (especially single-use items) most likely to end up as plastic pollution.

## **Supporters**

The Aspen Institute Catto Fellows

Natural Resources Defense Council

The 5 Gyres Institute

Californians Against Waste

WeTap

California Coastal Coalition

Urban Semillas

Environment Washington

Surfrider Foundation

Orange County Coastkeeper

Inland Empire Waterkeeper

Seventh Generation Advisors

Clean Water Action

Captain Charles Moore

ChicoBag Company

Sona Kalapura, Environmental Programs Manager, City of Manhattan Beach

Manuel Maqueda

Environment California

Team Marine

Heal the Bay

[Catto Fellowship](#)

Green Cities California

The City of Santa Monica

Save Our Shores

Center for Oceanic Awareness, Research, and Education

San Diego Coastkeeper

Environment Oregon

### **About the Supporters:**

**Aspen Institute Catto Fellows** is part of the Aspen Global Leadership Network. The Catto Fellowship brings together a diverse and accomplished group of 20 professionals in the environmental field from the NGO, government, and business communities to discuss values based leadership and how we can move from success to significance in our individual and collective work to address global environmental issues. We, as the current class of Catto Fellows, have committed our collective energy to addressing the significant challenge of protecting the oceans from the buildup of plastic pollution.

**Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)**, is an environmental advocacy organization that uses law, science and the support of our 1.3 million members and online activists to protect the planet's natural resources and ensure a safe and healthy environment for all living things.

**5 Gyres Institute** is a non-profit organization dedicated to researching plastic pollution in the world's oceans, and actively promoting solutions. With its scientific research, it engages policymakers, businesses, students, and communities around the world in solutions-based education. 5 Gyre's goal is to utilize first hand knowledge to stop the flow of plastic pollution to the world's oceans.

**Californians Against Waste** is recognized as one of the nation's leading non-profit environmental research and advocacy organizations focusing on resource conservation and pollution prevention through waste reduction and recycling. The organization's 34-year history and track record of accomplishments has demonstrated it to be principled, practical, creative and effective.

**WeTap** is a non profit that works toward improving and increasing the use of public drinking fountains and encouraging the protection and appreciating of municipal drinking water.

The **California Coastal Coalition (CalCoast)**, is a non-profit advocacy group comprised of 35 coastal cities; five counties; SANDAG, BEACON and SCAG; private sector partners and NGO's, committed to protecting and restoring California's coastline

through beach sand restoration, increasing the flow of natural sediment, wetlands recovery, improved water quality, watershed management and the reduction of marine debris and plastic pollution.

**Urban Semillas** is a social conscientious, reconnaissance and outreach, community-based watershed-driven organization. We work to educate underserved and monolingual (Spanish-speaking) communities about watershed and social justice issues, provide them with community-building skills and empower them to participate in local, regional and nationwide policies that impact their neighborhoods.

**Environment Washington** is a state-wide, citizen-based advocacy group. It works on protecting clean air, clean water, and open spaces. Combining independent research, practical ideas and tough-minded advocacy, Environment Washington seeks to overcome the opposition of powerful special interests and win real results for Washington's environment.

**Surfrider Foundation** is a grassroots, environmental non-profit organization dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of the world's oceans, waves, and beaches through a powerful activist network. Surfrider Foundation's Rise Above Plastics program is aimed at reducing the impacts of plastics on the marine environment by raising awareness about the dangers of plastic pollution and by advocating for a reduction of single-use plastics and the recycling of all plastics.

**Orange County Coastkeeper** is Orange County's leading water quality organization dedicated to protect and preserve the region's marine habitats and watersheds through education, advocacy, restoration, research and enforcement. Founded in 1999, Orange County Coastkeeper is a member of the international Waterkeeper Alliance and remains dedicated to preserving and protecting water from polluters.

**Inland Empire Waterkeeper** is a grassroots, non-profit water quality organization dedicated to enhancing and protecting the quality of the waterways within the Upper Santa Ana River Watershed. Inland Empire Waterkeeper guards water quality in San Bernardino and Riverside Counties in southern California and strives to preserve and protect water from polluters.

**Seventh Generation Advisors** is a nonprofit environmental organization working to make a sustainable world, seven generations into the future. Like many Native American traditions, SGA believes we must consider--in all our actions--the consequences to future world generations. Currently, our programs focus on climate change, and plastic pollution issues.

**Clean Water Action** is a U.S. based national grassroots environmental organization that has been helping citizens and local communities hold polluters accountable and reduce water pollution at the source since 1972. Clean Water Action is developing cutting edge policies and programs in source reduction and producer responsibility to minimize plastic pollution.

**Captain Charles Moore** is an oceanographer and captain of the Oceanographic Research Vessel, Algalita. He is the founder of Algalita Marine Research Institute, Long Beach Organic, and the co-author of the new book *Plastic Ocean*, which details his discovery of the Eastern Garbage Patch in the North Pacific and his efforts to combat the ocean's plastic plague.

The **ChicoBag Company's** mission is to help humanity eliminate the unnecessary use of single-use paper and plastic bags by designing reusable bags to be unforgettable and fun to use. A reusable bag left at home or in the car does no good. Therefore, all ChicoBag products easily stuff or fold down into compact, pocket-sized stuff-sacks making it easy for people to say no to single-use bags, not just sometimes but every time. The ChicoBag Company also offers school fundraising programs, a custom promotional bag program and the infamous Bag Monster - a costume that represents the average American's annual consumption of single-use plastic bags.  
[www.chicobag.com](http://www.chicobag.com) [www.bagmonster.com](http://www.bagmonster.com)

**Sona Kalapura, Environmental Programs Manager, City of Manhattan Beach.** Sona leads the development and implementation of the environmental programs for the coastal Southern California city of Manhattan Beach. Being a coastal city, this community has taken marine pollution very seriously, and it was at the request of its residents and youth that the City Council unanimously banned plastic bags in the city. The City was the recent winner in a July California Supreme Court ruling, earning the right to move forward with its plastic bag ordinance in spite of the 3-year legal battle brought by the plastic bag industry.

**Manuel Maqueda** is co-founder of Plastic Pollution Coalition, an international coalition of organizations working together to stop plastic pollution worldwide; and a participant in Midway Journey, a transmedia art project documenting the effects of plastic pollution on the remote island of Midway.

**Environment California** is a state-wide, citizen-based advocacy group. It works on protecting clean air, clean water, and open spaces. Combining independent research, practical ideas and tough-minded advocacy, Environment California seeks to overcome the opposition of powerful special interests and win real results for California's environment.

**Team Marine** is a multi-award winning eco-action group of teens dedicated to advancing environmental sustainability through research, multimedia, service learning, and community outreach. Their work focuses on raising awareness about the problems of and solution to climate change, ocean acidification, overfishing, and plastic pollution.

**Heal the Bay** is a non-profit environmental organization with over 13,000 members dedicated to making southern California's coastal waters and watersheds, including Santa Monica Bay, safe, healthy and clean.

**Green Cities California** is a coalition of twelve of California's largest and most environmentally progressive jurisdictions in the State. Our mission is to accelerate the adoption of sustainability policies and practices through collaborative effort. We have worked together as a coalition for the last two years to promote local single use bag bans, and commissioned the development of a Master Environmental Assessment on Single Use and Reusable bags toward that end, which is available here: <http://greencitiescalifornia.org/mea>

**The City of Santa Monica** is a coastal city in Southern California with a population of 90,000 residents. Over the past several decades the city has shown strong leadership for sustainability and the environment, notably with the adoption and implementation of its Sustainable City Plan, which began in 1994, and subsequent actions to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve water quality, and improve the quality of life for visitors and residents. As a coastal city Santa Monica has long been concerned with marine plastic pollution and has worked hard to address it. In 2008 the city became one of the first in the country to ban the use of non-recyclable plastic food service packaging and in 2010 it became one of the first cities in California to ban single use plastic bags.

**Save Our Shores** is the Central Coast leader in caring for the marine environment through ocean awareness, advocacy and citizen action. Over the last 30 years, Save Our Shores helped to establish the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, prevent offshore oil drilling and cruise ship pollution, and today focuses on educating youth about our local watersheds, tackling pollution on our beaches and rivers, implementing our renowned Dockwalker oil spill prevention program, and providing our community with educated and inspired docents in our Sanctuary Stewards program.

The **Center for Oceanic Awareness, Research, and Education** seeks to enlighten people, young and old, to the plight of the oceans, to change the way they think and act, and to encourage them to create positive and lasting change. COARE's purpose is to study our oceans and increase public awareness of the earth's marine environment through educational programs and outreach.

**San Diego Coastkeeper** protects the region's inland and coastal waters for the communities and wildlife that depend on them by blending education, community empowerment and advocacy.

**Environment Oregon** is a statewide, membership-driven environment advocacy organization dedicated to protecting clean air clean water and open spaces. We combine direct advocacy with grassroots organizing to deliver real results for Oregon's environment.