



WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL ABOUT STRAWS?

It's just a little bit of plastic, right? But those small straws add up: We use more than 500 million plastic straws each day. Straws are too small to be easily recycled. So they become trash—often in the ocean. These products made our [BAN List 2.0](#) as some of the world's worst plastic items—from both an environmental and toxic chemicals perspective. In fact, [plastic straws are one of the top polluters on our beaches](#) and [can be harmful to animals](#). Many straws are made from [polystyrene](#), the same plastic that makes expanded polystyrene foam—better known as "Styrofoam"—which we're targeting with our [Nix the 6](#) campaign.

5 Gyres has historically supported efforts to help change this reality—in 2017 we partnered with The Lonely Whale Foundation on [Strawless Ocean](#), an initiative that harnesses celebrity power to encourage everyone to [#stopsucking](#). And the movement is growing! In 2018, Queen Elizabeth II banned plastic straws and bottles from all royal estates; Prime Minister Theresa May followed suit with a ban on the sale of plastic straws. Marriott, the world's largest hotel company, banned straws at all 60 of their British properties (they also phased out mini-plastic shampoo bottles from 1,500 American hotels, replacing them with wall-mounted dispensers to eliminate 113,000 pounds of plastic waste per year.) The final nail in the coffin for straws? Last year, Bacardi, Absolut, Baileys and Smirnoff all eliminated straws and stirrers from events and advertising.

Meanwhile, the thing to remember about plastic straws is this: *You can refuse them*. Pledge to go **#plasticfree**:

- When you order a drink say, "Without a straw, please!"
- Ask servers and restaurant owners to switch to a "straws on request" policy, rather than dropping off straws when they're not asked for. (This is a great money saver, too!) If you're on the shy side, click here to [download this flyer](#) that you can leave at the table.

- If you need a straw, bring your own biodegradable paper* or [bamboo straws](#) or reusable metal or glass versions.

TAKE THE PLEDGE!

I PLEDGE TO GO #PLASTICFREE



We're so proud of our former Executive Director Rachel Lincoln Sarnoff, who shared information on straws and other plastic polluters on the TEDxSantaBarbara stage in 2017.

*Yes, we know paper comes from trees. But using paper straws represents a far lower environmental impact than plastic.

Sources:

Ecocycle, "Be Straw Free Campaign" Ecocycle

Jackie Nunez, "The Sipping Point" The Last Plastic Straw



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PLANET**

The 5 Gyre Institute is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council since 2017. Our mission is to empower action against the global health crisis of plastic pollution through science, education, and adventure.

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