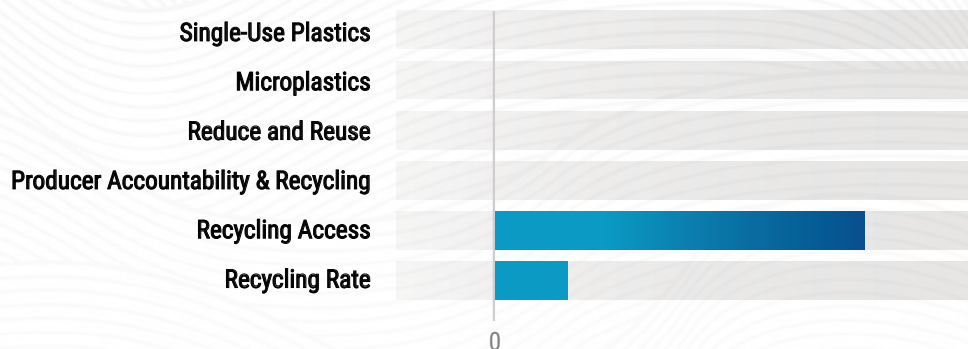


United States OF PLASTICS

Alaska

PACIFIC AND COLORADO RIVER BASINS

Alaska has the highest mileage of shoreline of all U.S. states at nearly 34,000 miles (including islands).¹ A healthy ocean is central to life in Alaska. Coastal communities depend on the ocean for food, economic opportunity, cultural continuity and other aspects of daily life. Tribes have stewarded ocean resources in Alaska for millennia and continue to do so today. These ocean waters provide vital feeding and breeding habitat for thousands of species of whales, birds, fish and other iconic wildlife. Because of ocean currents, Alaska also receives plastic pollution that originates beyond its borders. The state has yet to pass legislation that would reduce plastic pollution, which poses a serious threat to its communities and wildlife.



FINAL SCORE



Needs Improvement

¹ ["Shoreline Mileage of the United States."](#) NOAA Office for Coastal Management. Accessed May 2025.



Single-Use Plastics

The state has not passed any laws restricting the single-use plastics reviewed in our study.



Reduce and Reuse

The state has not enacted any laws relating to plastic reduction or reuse.



Microplastics

The state has not passed any laws to address microplastic pollution.



Producer Accountability and Recycling

The state has not enacted extended producer responsibility or deposit return systems for packaging or beverage containers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- There are many opportunities to take action in Alaska. Policies that reduce our reliance on single-use plastics can have a near-term impact on preventing plastic pollution and raise awareness of the issue for future action.
- Given the rural nature of many communities in the state, policies that support local reuse and refill systems could help reduce reliance on single-use plastics and the need to transport waste over long distances.

Top 10 Items Collected by ICC Volunteers

- 1 Fishing Net & Pieces
- 2 Fishing Line
- 3 Rope
- 4 Fishing Buoys, Pots, & Traps
- 5 Cigarette Butts
- 6 Other Plastic Foam
- 7 Beverage Bottles
- 8 Beverage Cans
- 9 Food Wrappers
- 10 Construction Material

Managing Marine Debris

Marine debris is the term used to describe a range of items found polluting the marine environment—including microplastics, single-use plastics, abandoned and lost fishing gear and derelict fishing vessels. Marine debris presents a significant threat to Alaska's ecosystems, wildlife and coastal communities, harming wildlife, local economies and customary and traditional harvesting and cultural practices that are critical to Alaska communities. The marine debris problem in Alaska is exacerbated by the sheer size of the state and the nature of its coast. The state's shoreline is larger than that of the rest of the contiguous U.S. combined with much of it being remote, difficult to access and far from resources and debris disposal options. While community and Tribal-led cleanup efforts are increasingly underway across the state, these efforts are often limited by the lack of reliable, affordable options for transporting collected debris off-site. A statewide backhaul program is essential to support these cleanups, enabling debris to be removed from remote locations and properly managed—rather than left to accumulate on beaches, burned or dumped in overburdened landfills.