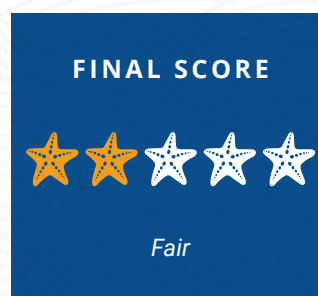
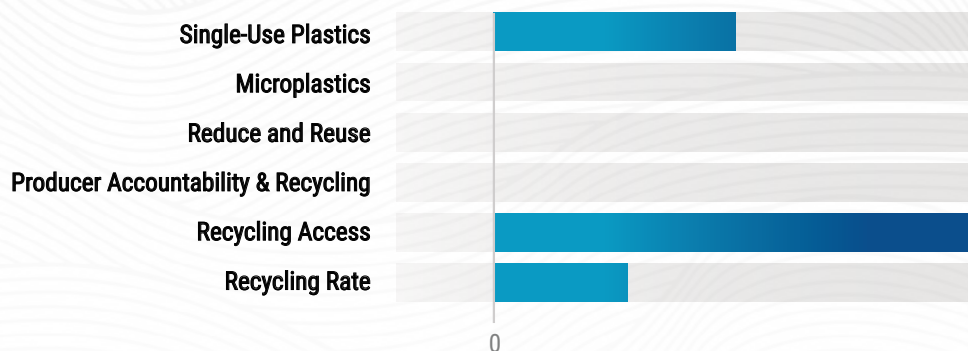


United States OF PLASTICS

Delaware

MID-ATLANTIC

Delaware is deeply intertwined with the health of its waterways and the Atlantic Ocean. Bordered by the Delaware River, Delaware Bay and the Atlantic, the state has a rich maritime history and economy rooted in coastal tourism, shipping and fisheries. Delaware's beaches and estuaries, such as those within the Delaware National Estuarine Research Reserve, provide critical habitat for migratory birds, shellfish and marine species, including the largest spawning population of horseshoe crabs in the world. Delaware's coast also provides storm protection and popular recreational opportunities. Recognizing the importance of protecting these natural resources, Delaware has a history of environmental stewardship that includes taking actions to address plastic pollution. However, there are many opportunities for continued progress.





Single-Use Plastics

Delaware has passed laws to phase out expanded polystyrene foodware, single-use plastic bags and plastic foodware accessories like stirrers and picks.¹ The state also requires that single-use plastic straws be provided to consumers only by request.²



Microplastics

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



Reduce and Reuse

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



Producer Accountability and Recycling

The state does not have extended producer responsibility (EPR) or deposit return programs for packaging or beverage containers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Despite having a high recycling access rate, Delaware has a relatively low recycling rate. Policies like comprehensive EPR combined with a deposit return system could increase the amount of material that is recycled and kept out of the environment without increasing costs for local governments.
- Given the increasing detection of microplastics in seafood³ and the importance of fisheries and coastal tourism to the state's economy, Delaware could consider policies to address microplastic pollution such as requiring filters for new washing machines to reduce microfiber pollution and safeguard the state's seafood industry.

Top 10 Items Collected by ICC Volunteers

- 1 Cigarette Butts
- 2 Bottle Caps (Plastic)
- 3 Food Wrappers (Candy, chips, etc.)
- 4 Beverage Bottles (Plastic)
- 5 Beverage Cans
- 6 Straws, Stirrers
- 7 Beverage Bottles (Glass)
- 8 Grocery Bags (Plastic)
- 9 Other Plastic Bags
- 10 Lids (Plastic)

¹ SB 51, 152nd Gen. Assemb. (Del. 2023) (expanded polystyrene, accessories); Del. Code tit. 7, § 6099A (bags).

² SB 51 (Del. 2023).

³ Smith, M., et al. (2018). *Current Environmental Health Reports*.