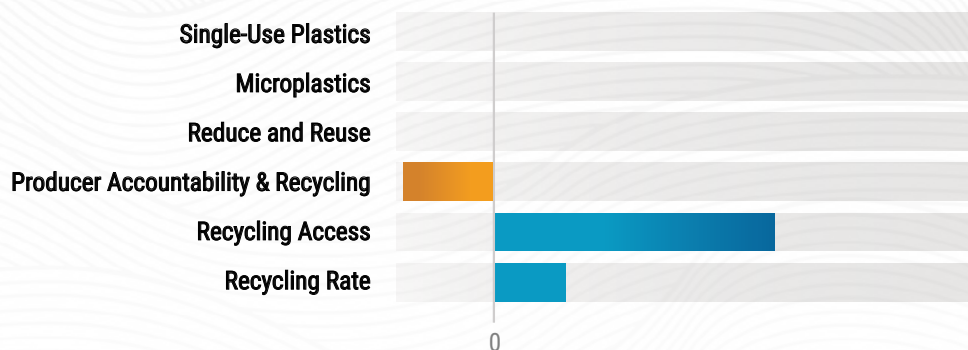


# United States OF PLASTICS

## Kentucky

MISSOURI-MISSISSIPPI DRAINAGE

Kentucky is deeply dependent on water through its extensive river network, including the Ohio River which flows into the Mississippi River before ultimately draining into the Gulf. These waterways are vital to Kentucky's economy, supporting agriculture, manufacturing and transportation. They also serve as the primary source of drinking water for more than five million residents, contributing to the state's ranking as number one for best tap water across the country.<sup>1</sup> While the state relies on its rivers' health for a multitude of reasons, Kentucky has yet to pass legislation to address plastic pollution and has enacted a law that could hinder further progress.



### FINAL SCORE



*Needs Improvement*

<sup>1</sup> "As Americans Focus on Water Quality, These States Boast the Best." (2023). J.D. Power.





### Single-Use Plastics

The state has not passed any laws restricting the single-use plastics covered 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 does not have extended producer responsibility or deposit return programs for packaging or beverage containers. The state has also adopted policies that support harmful chemical recycling.<sup>2</sup>

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Kentucky should reverse policies that enable harmful chemical recycling technologies and undermine reduction and effective recycling practices.
- Kentucky would benefit from increased participation in Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup® (ICC). Organizing cleanup efforts removes harmful plastic pollution from the environment, helps raise citizen awareness and gathers important data to better target policy solutions. A great way to get involved and contribute valuable data is to download Ocean Conservancy's Clean Swell® app or join an ICC event.
- As microplastics have been shown to affect soil health and crop productivity,<sup>3</sup> the state could consider policies to address microplastic pollution such as requiring filters for new washing machines to reduce microfiber pollution and safeguard its agricultural industry.

## Top 10 Items Collected by ICC Volunteers

- 1 Beverage Bottles (Plastic)
- 2 Beverage Cans
- 3 Other Plastic/Foam Packaging
- 4 Beverage Bottles (Glass)
- 5 Food Wrappers (Candy, chips, etc.)
- 6 Cigarette Butts
- 7 Other Plastic Bottles (Oil, bleach, etc.)
- 8 Fishing Line (1 yard/meter = 1 piece)
- 9 Grocery Bags (Plastic)
- 10 Bottle Caps (Metal)

<sup>2</sup> HB 45, 2022 Reg. Sess (Ky, 2022). Ocean Conservancy considers chemical recycling technologies harmful if they do not recover plastic and create environmental and societal harm. Learn more about our position on chemical recycling.

<sup>3</sup> Hoang, V.-H., et al. (2024). *Science of the Total Environment*.