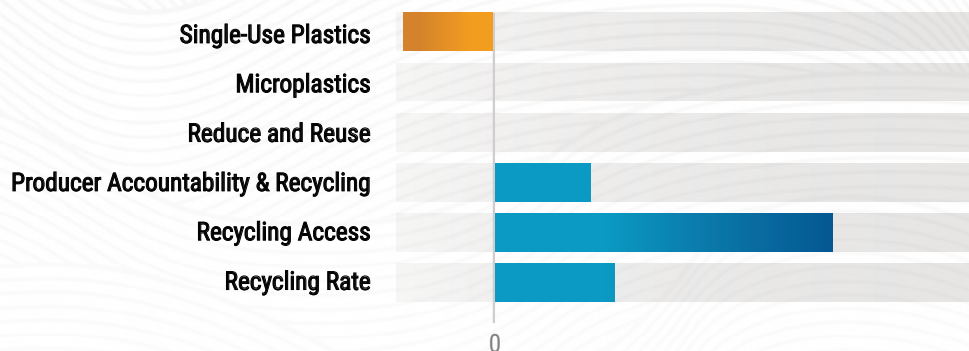


United States OF PLASTICS

Michigan

GREAT LAKES BASIN

Michigan is uniquely defined by its connection to water, bordered by four of the five Great Lakes —Superior, Michigan, Huron and Erie—which together hold over 20% of the world's surface freshwater.¹ This vast freshwater network not only shapes the state's identity but also supports its economy, including fisheries, agriculture, shipping, tourism and recreation. The Great Lakes are indirectly connected to the Atlantic Ocean through the St. Lawrence River. Plastic pollution, including microplastics, has been increasingly detected in the Great Lakes. While dependent on the health of its surrounding waterways, Michigan has yet to pass many laws to address plastic pollution and has enacted laws that could hinder further progress.



¹ ["Great Lakes Facts and Figures."](#) U.S. EPA. Accessed May 2025.



Single-Use Plastics

The state has a law limiting local governments' ability to regulate single-use plastics and has not passed any laws restricting single-use plastics covered in our study.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

Michigan has a bottle bill for beverage containers that establishes a 10-cent deposit.³ The state has also adopted policies that support harmful chemical recycling.⁴

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Michigan has a low recycling rate despite having an existing deposit return system. Policies like extended producer responsibility would complement the state's existing deposit return system and increase the amount of material that is recycled and kept out of the environment without increasing costs for local governments. Expanding the types of beverage containers covered under the bottle bill and making other updates to improve the system would be another option to decrease plastic pollution and improve local recycling.
- Michigan has policies in place that are impeding progress towards addressing plastic pollution. The state should:
 - Remove restrictions on local governments and allow them to regulate single-use plastics in their communities.
 - Reverse policies that enable harmful chemical recycling technologies and undermine reduction and effective recycling practices.
- Given the high concentration of microplastics found in the Great Lakes, Michigan should consider policies to address microplastic pollution, such as requiring filters for new washing machines to reduce microfiber pollution, addressing pollution from pre-production plastic pellets and implementing recommendations from the International Joint Commission.⁵

Top 10 Items Collected by ICC Volunteers

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

² SB 853, 98th Leg. Reg. Sess. 2016 (Mich. 2016).

³ Mich. Comp. Laws §§ 445.571 et seq.

⁴ HB 2254, 101st Leg. Reg. Sess. 2022 (Mich. 2022). Ocean Conservancy considers chemical recycling technologies to be harmful when they do not recover plastic and create environmental and social harm. Learn more about our position on chemical recycling.

⁵ Kidd, K., et al. "Final Report of the IJC Great Lakes Science Advisory Board Work Group on Microplastics." Nov. 2024.