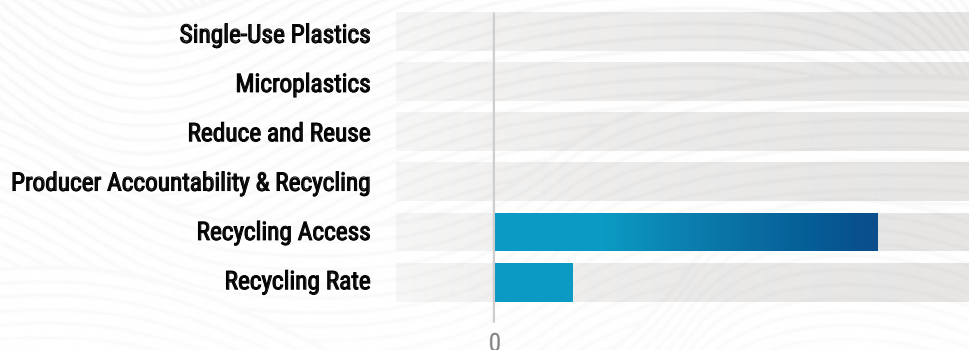


# United States OF PLASTICS

## New Mexico

RIO GRANDE & TEXAS GULF

Communities in New Mexico rely on the Rio Grande River, which flows from Colorado through New Mexico and Texas before draining into the Gulf. The Rio Grande is the third longest river in the continental United States and supports over six million people through drinking water use, agricultural use and recreation. Several threatened and endangered species also rely on the waters in the Rio Grande Basin, including the Southwestern willow flycatcher, Rio Grande silvery minnow and New Mexico meadow jumping mouse. New Mexico is renowned for its unique desert landscapes, including Carlsbad Caverns National Park and the Chihuahuan Desert, both of which rely on healthy ecosystems to thrive. New Mexico has yet to pass legislation that would address plastic pollution, which poses a serious threat to its communities and wildlife.



FINAL SCORE



*Needs Improvement*





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

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- There are many opportunities to take action in New Mexico. 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.
- Since tourism is a major driver in New Mexico's economy, the state has an opportunity to champion sustainable tourism by phasing out single-use plastics for personal care products in hotels. Reducing the use of unnecessary single-use plastics by tourists could lead to a significant reduction in waste and pollution.
- The state has a relatively high recycling access rate, but recycling rates are still less than 20% and some of the top items collected by ICC volunteers are readily recyclable. Policies like comprehensive EPR 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.

## Top 10 Items Collected by ICC Volunteers

- 1 Cigarette Butts
- 2 Beverage Bottles (Glass)
- 3 Beverage Bottles (Plastic)
- 4 Beverage Cans
- 5 Food Wrappers (Candy, chips, etc.)
- 6 Other Plastic Waste  
*\*2022 onward*
- 7 Bottle Caps (Plastic)
- 8 Other (non-plastic) Trash  
*\*2016 onward*
- 9 6-Pack Holders
- 10 Bottle Caps (Metal)