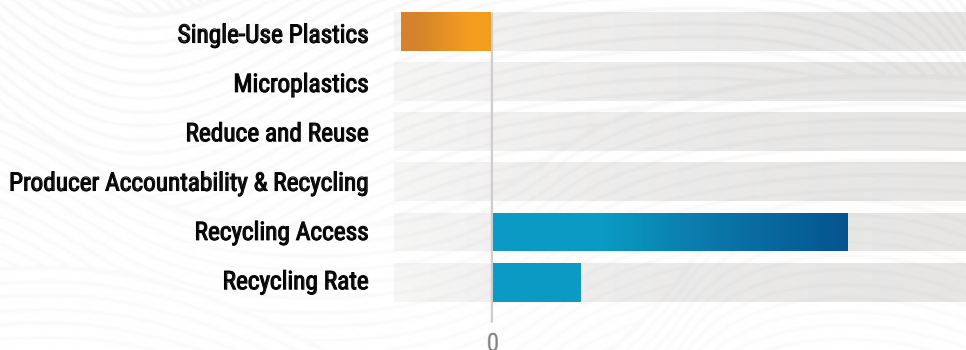


United States OF PLASTICS

North Carolina

SOUTH ATLANTIC-GULF

North Carolina sits along the Atlantic coast and its economy relies heavily on its connection to the ocean and its extensive network of rivers and estuaries. North Carolina spans three distinct environments from the Appalachian Mountains in the west, to the Piedmont Plateau, and on to the Outer Banks in the east. The Outer Banks, a chain of barrier islands, are not only a popular tourist destination but also serve as critical habitats for wildlife and as natural protection against hurricanes and sea-level rise. These coastal and aquatic environments are essential to the state's identity and economy, supporting major industries such as fishing, tourism, agriculture and shipping. North Carolina has cultivated a thriving economy reliant on a healthy ocean, but to date, the state has yet to pass laws that would address plastic pollution and has enacted a law that could hinder further progress.



FINAL SCORE



Needs Improvement



Single-Use Plastics

North Carolina has a law limiting local governments' ability to regulate single-use plastics and has not passed any laws restricting the single-use plastics covered in our study.¹



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

- North Carolina 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
- Although North Carolina's recycling access rate is higher than some states, its recycling rate is low. 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 (Plastic)
- 3 Beverage Cans
- 4 Food Wrappers (Candy, chips, etc.)
- 5 Beverage Bottles (Glass)
- 6 Bottle Caps (Plastic)
- 7 Grocery Bags (Plastic)
- 8 Other Plastic Bags
- 9 Cups & Plates (Plastic)
- 10 Straws, Stirrers

¹ N.C. Gen. Stat. §§ 153A-145.12, 160A-205.7.