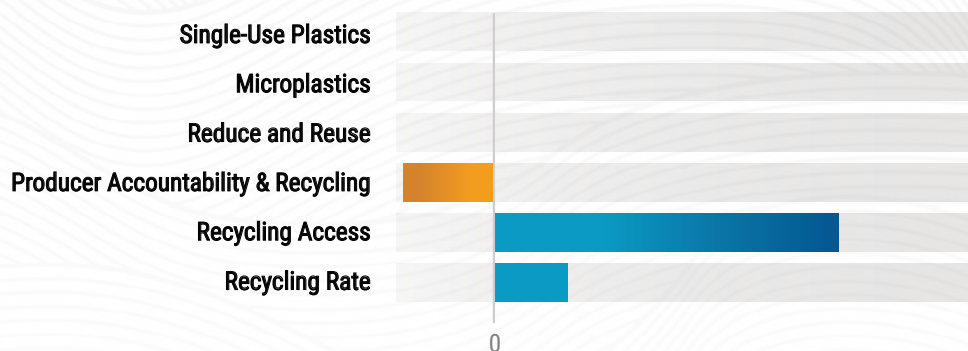


United States OF PLASTICS

South Carolina

SOUTH ATLANTIC-GULF

South Carolina's deep connection to the ocean is evident in its extensive Atlantic shoreline, estuaries, salt marshes and river systems that support diverse ecosystems and vibrant coastal communities. The ocean is vital to the state's economy through tourism, commercial and recreational fishing and shipping. South Carolina's iconic natural areas like the ACE Basin (located around the Ashepoo, Combahee and Edisto Rivers) and its coastal waters are home to wildlife, including threatened and endangered sea turtles, as well as sturgeons, mussels and rays. Just off South Carolina's coast, extending from the top of the state to the top of Florida, is the only known calving ground for the critically endangered North Atlantic right whale.¹ South Carolina has yet to pass legislation to address plastic pollution and has enacted a law that could hinder further progress.



FINAL SCORE



Needs Improvement

¹ ["North Atlantic Right Whale Calving Season 2025."](#) NOAA Fisheries. Accessed May 2025.



Single-Use Plastics

South Carolina 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. South Carolina has also adopted policies that support harmful chemical recycling.²

RECOMMENDATIONS

- South Carolina has policies in place that are impeding progress towards addressing plastic pollution. The state should reverse policies that enable harmful chemical recycling technologies and undermine reduction and effective recycling practices.
- Although South 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 Cans
- 3 Food Wrappers (Candy, chips, etc.)
- 4 Beverage Bottles (Plastic)
- 5 Bottle Caps (Plastic)
- 6 Beverage Bottles (Glass)
- 7 Straws, Stirrers
- 8 Grocery Bags (Plastic)
- 9 Construction Materials
- 10 Cups & Plates (Plastic)



² S 525, 124th Sess, 2021–2022 (S.C. 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.