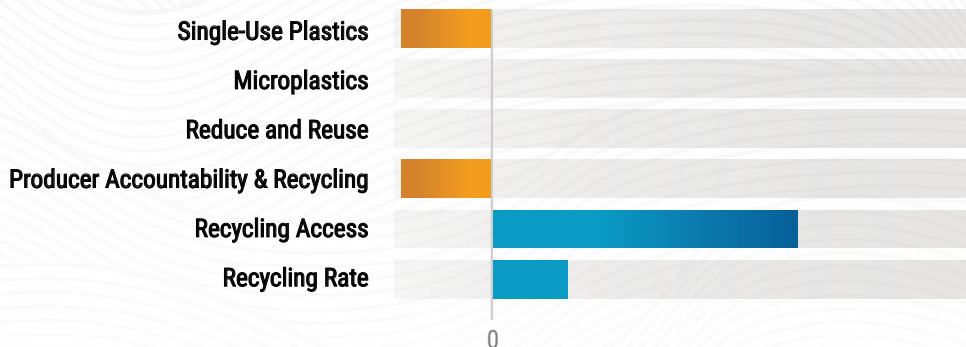


United States OF PLASTICS

Texas

RIO GRANDE & TEXAS GULF

Texas's vast shoreline has shaped both its natural environment and its communities. Coastal towns and cities depend on the ocean for tourism, fishing and recreation, while marine wildlife thrives in habitats like estuaries and wetlands supported by this coastal access. Economically, the Gulf supports billions in revenue through industries such as shipping, commercial fishing and energy production. While communities in Texas have made efforts to address plastic pollution on the local level, the state has yet to pass legislation that would address plastic pollution and has enacted laws that could hinder further progress.



FINAL SCORE

★☆☆☆☆

Needs Improvement



Single-Use Plastics

The state has a law limiting local governments' ability to regulate single-use plastics and has not passed any statewide restrictions on 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. The state has also adopted policies that support harmful chemical recycling.²

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Texas 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.
- The state has both a low recycling access rate and a low recycling rate. 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 Bottle Caps (Plastic)
- 3 Beverage Bottles (Plastic)
- 4 Food Wrappers (Candy, chips, etc.)
- 5 Beverage Cans
- 6 Rope (1 yard/meter = 1 piece)
- 7 Grocery Bags (Plastic)
- 8 Straws, Stirrers
- 9 Beverage Bottles (Glass)
- 10 Other Plastic Bags

Home of Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup® (ICC)

In 1986, the inaugural ICC event took place on a Galveston, Texas beach. Founders Linda Maraniss and Kathy O'Hara, colleagues at Ocean Conservancy's predecessor organization (Center for Environmental Education) knew that volunteers could assist with more than just trash pickup. So, in addition to removing pollution, volunteers meticulously documented each item they collected, starting what is now the longest-running marine debris database in the world. Since then, the cleanup has grown and changed, but the mission has remained the same: to have an immediate, positive impact on waterway and ocean health, including the communities that depend on them, and to collect critically important data to drive policy change to keep plastics from getting to the ocean in the first place. Over the last 40 years, more than 18 million volunteers have collected more than 380 million pounds of debris worldwide through the ICC.

¹ Tex. Health & Safety Code Ann. § 361.0961; SB 577, 88th Leg. Reg. Sess. (Tex. 2023).

² HB 3060, 88th Leg. Reg. Sess. (Tex. 2023); HB 1953, 86th Leg. Reg. Sess. (Tex. 2019). 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](#).