



MILLION ACTS OF BLUE

A TOOLKIT FOR A PLASTIC-FREE FUTURE

ACTION
#3

Help create plastic-free supermarkets

THANK YOU FOR DOWNLOADING **A MILLION ACTS OF BLUE:** **A TOOLKIT FOR A PLASTIC-FREE FUTURE!**

**PLASTIC POLLUTION
IS EVERYWHERE,
AND WE NEED
EVERYONE
TO TACKLE IT!**

We have all seen the heartbreaking images of beaches covered with plastic waste and animals' stomachs full of it. It's easy to feel overwhelmed and frustrated that in our daily lives we are surrounded by single-use plastic products without alternatives. Our efforts to reduce our own plastic footprint and recycle are admirable and important, but often plastic straws, bags, bottles, and packaging are pushed on us before we have a chance to refuse, or we need products that are only offered packaged in plastic. **We operate in a broken system, it's clogged with plastic, and the people controlling the machine won't turn it off!** The good news is that together we can fix it. And here's how we are going to do it.

Greenpeace, alongside numerous other organizations in the #BreakFreeFromPlastic movement, is campaigning globally to stop the plastic pollution problem at its source – the corporations that have created it and the governments that are failing to regulate it.

**WE BELIEVE IN A
WORLD THAT'S
FREE OF SINGLE-
USE PLASTICS,
AND WE ARE
UNITING TO BUILD IT.**

There is a growing movement of people who are rejecting the old narrative that throwaway plastics are unavoidable and it's up to individuals to make changes in their daily lives to solve the plastic epidemic. Instead, **we are joining together through a Million Acts of Blue, for our beautiful blue planet, to create the real change we need to secure a plastic-free future that is healthier for our families, our communities and the species that call this planet home.** We are holding companies accountable, urging governments to take strong action, and championing a lifestyle that reconnects us to each other and to the beauty of the planet we are working to protect.

**WHAT IS AN
ACT OF BLUE?**

Turning the tide on plastic pollution by taking action to stop single-use plastic from being created in the first place. Inspired by love for our amazing blue planet and the urgent need to protect our oceans, waterways, landscapes and communities.

We are excited that you have joined us and look forward to supporting you in the change you will be making in your corner of the world.



HELP CREATE PLASTIC-FREE SUPERMARKETS

Supermarkets large and small are a hub for single-use plastic sales. In most grocery or big-box stores it is nearly impossible to avoid products in plastic packaging, making it difficult to make plastic-free choices. We are conditioned to think that our fruit and veg need to be wrapped in plastic for sanitary and protective reasons, even though nature already thought of that and we wash our produce before we eat it anyway. While many people have joined the bring-your-own-bag movement, single-use plastic bags still line the produce aisles and check-out counters around the world, and that's only one example of the numerous single-use plastic items offered.

Many people have had enough and are calling not only for plastic-free aisles, but for plastic-free shopping experiences. Zero waste markets are popping up around the world and recently a major supermarket chain in the UK, Iceland, vowed to stop selling its own brand products in single-use plastic. More and more companies are offering their drinks or products in reusable or refillable containers and bulk food is starting to make a resurgence. Progress is being made but **we need the major supermarket chains and more grocers to act to reduce their plastic footprint to create the scale of change needed.**

Supermarket managers and executives are constantly listening for what their customers do and do not want. Sharing your desire for your supermarket to go plastic-free can help provide the incentive they need to move in the right direction.



There are many different ways to influence your local grocer or a major supermarket chain. You could send the manager or CEO an email, hand deliver a letter to the store manager or the company's headquarters, set up a meeting with the manager or a company executive, send them a message through social media by tagging them, or if they are not receptive to your request, you could increase the pressure on them by starting a petition or visiting a store to take direct action.

What do we want supermarkets to do?

1. Create a single-use plastic reduction policy and transition plan that includes social responsibility considerations
2. Phase out single-use plastic packaging (eg. plastic bags, products like plastic bottles, sachets, etc)
3. Invest in reusable packaging and new delivery systems
4. Extended Producer Responsibility - Take full responsibility (social and environmental) and demand the same of suppliers, for the entire lifecycle of the product and its packaging.
5. Increase transparency by measuring and reporting on plastic reduction and waste production and undergoing audits.



Getting started

Once you have determined the local store or supermarket chain you want to change, some internet or in-store research will be needed to figure out who the decision-makers are. Who you talk to will depend on the size and style of the chain. If it's a smaller, independent store you might want to see if you can speak directly to the owner, whereas for a large chain you might focus on the store manager to start, and wait to involve the CEO if the manager does not seem interested in taking action. An internet search can often yield the necessary information, but email addresses are not always easily available so you can either use the general information email address to request the name and contact information for the right person or call or visit a store to determine the individual in charge.

Sending an email or writing a letter

Whether you are sending an email or writing a letter, the most important thing is to be clear about what you are requesting. Are you writing to request a meeting? Are you writing to express your concern and urge action? Are you writing to hear what the store's policy is on single-use plastic and waste reduction? Is it all of the above? The most effective letters not only express concern but also request a response in some form to help gather information and begin a dialogue.

Here's a general outline for an email or letter

- Why are you sending the email?
- What is your concern or what is the problem?
- What do you propose the company does about it?
- How is the company going to address your concern?
- Thank them for their attention to this issue.



What is your concern or what is the problem?

If you would like to use some facts about plastic pollution to help inform your contact about the urgency of the situation and their role in helping to solve it, you can consult the fact sheet found [here](#). You may even be able to find information online about how much waste the company produced or any stats, depending on whether a corporate social responsibility report is released annually or if an environmental organization has already done some scoping. If not, those are questions that you can ask in your email, letter or in-person communication.

What do you propose the company does about it?

This is where you make a clear ask or set of asks to the company. What can the company do to address the problem of plastic pollution and what can the person you are writing to do, specifically. Supermarkets can take various immediate steps to reduce their reliance on, and sales of, single-use plastic. The asks are outlined above and you can find some [key messages here](#) that help to provide context. For an initial email or letter, it is important to provide enough information to inspire the person to act while also not providing so much so as to overwhelm them. Remember that the person you are contacting has many responsibilities to balance, like we all do, so being courteous and to the point can go a long way.

How is the company going to address your concern?

This is the part of the email or letter where you request to meet them to discuss the matter further and request their plans to address the problem. If the email or letter is to a CEO, a meeting may not be immediately possible or possible at all, but you can always ask. And if you do not get a response, do not give up, persistence can yield results!



Delivering a letter

One way to take a next step if you do not receive a response or receive one that addresses your concerns, is to pay a store a visit. And when it comes to getting the attention of a business, in person is usually the best option. Stop by the store and ask for the manager. If the manager is not available and you want to leave your letter, make sure your contact information is on the letter and ask for the person's email address so you can follow up to ensure they received it.

Setting up and preparing for a meeting

First things first, make an appointment. Store managers and company executives are busy people—make an appointment so they will have time to talk to you. Once the meeting is secured, **prepare for what you want to say.** Ensure you have any supporting information with you that you can refer to if need be. Writing down some key points you would like to make and questions you would like to ask can help you feel more comfortable. Providing background information to the person you are meeting with is always a good idea so they can get a clear understanding of the problem you would like them to tackle. **Have a clear ask.** Prepare to leave the meeting having achieved your outcome and determine in advance what that is. **Avoid false solutions and rabbit holes.** Don't try to talk about things you are not clear on. It's an easy trap to get into but there is nothing wrong with saying you will look into something and get back to them. False solutions, like those found [here](#), may be something the person you are meeting with has considered, is acting on or has heard about, so be clear about what are the solutions from your perspective and avoid those that are not.

Be aware of your body language and tone. Being genuine, fair and open-minded can help build trust and rapport, and ease the other party if they feel nervous. Don't be all business, but be professional. Speaking to the person as a person and respecting their space to talk, ask questions and be contemplative is important in building the relationship. The



person you are speaking with may not have all the answers, or all the decision-making ability, so be mindful of what that person brings with them to the conversation. **Once you've had the meeting**, write a thank you note or email and recap any commitments made or next steps. Even if the meeting did not go the way you wanted, this is an important step in building the relationship, creating a dialogue and showing the person that you respect their time even if you do not respect their current single-use plastic purchasing decisions!

Start a petition

There are various tools that can be used to create a petition. Some popular ones are listed below and they provide tips on how to make your petition successful. Just like writing an effective letter or email, make sure what you want the company to do is clear and you pull from the asks outlined above. For petitions, targeting the CEO or local store owner is often a great way to get a company's attention. Once it is created make sure to share it widely on social media and ask your friends to do the same. Once you have a solid number of signatures, consider how you will deliver the petition. There are many ways that you can do that like through email, by printing off the signatures and including them in a hand delivered or mailed package, or in combination with a visit to the store with other concerned people to create more attention.

www.change.org/start-a-petition

www.thepetitionsite.com/create-a-petition.html

www.ipetitions.com/

Target through social media

With online shopping and social media remaining popular, many companies are engaging their customers online. One way to get their attention is by posting a question or call to action on social media and tagging the company you want to take action. Whether a tweet, Instagram post or Facebook post, making it clear what the company is doing wrong and what they can do instead is key, a task that is



easier on Facebook than it is in limited characters through Twitter. A picture is worth a thousands words so if you are in your local store, staring some single-use plastic in the face, take a snapshot and share it to social media tagging the company with your ask for them. Be sure to tag it with #BreakFreeFromPlastic!

Take action at stores

If you have reached out to the company, tried to or have succeeded in meeting with them and are still not seeing a commitment to action from them? Taking direct action can be an effective option. [Join Greenwire](#) or contact us at million.acts@greenpeace.org to learn more about how you might get a company's attention or how to support Greenpeace campaigns focused on supermarkets in different countries.

You've made progress with your supermarket? Awesome!

- **Keep us posted!** Please send us information about the outcome at million.acts@greenpeace.org.
- **Spread the word on social media!** Share any positive commitments or developments made by your supermarket and add the hashtags #MillionActsofBlue and #BreakFreeFromPlastic.
- **Tackle another section of the toolkit!** Inspired to do more? Download another section and be in touch with how we can support you in another Act of Blue!

Other groups taking action on plastic

Check out our allies in the movement at www.breakfreefromplastic.org

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