

Consumers Worry, Countries Fumble in Addressing Global Plastic Use

Orb Media examines four aspects of the plastic problem: marine waste, microplastics, chemicals, and recycling

(Washington, DC | December 14, 2018)— New Orb Media Inc. [reporting and data analysis](#) shows consumers are extremely worried about plastic's impact on the world. There is widespread public confusion regarding responsibilities and options, and the role of governments and industry in reducing plastic pollution.

Reporting highlights include:

Plastic Bag Substitutes Generate Greater Carbon Footprint

Compostable plastic bags can't degrade in landfills or nature and must be separated and heated in an industrial facility. Most bioplastics have the same environmental hazards and a bigger carbon footprint.

Studies show that making and moving glass bottles uses nearly five times more energy.

Paper bag production, considered a greener choice by many, produces more air pollution than plastic bag production.

Attitude Impacts Recycling Habits

Recent research shows the mood of a community can affect recycling rates. The average weight of campus recycling was nearly 50 percent higher after a college basketball victory than after a loss or tie at one U.S. university. On rainy days, the total mass of household recycling collected in one London borough fell by one kilogram for every millimeter of precipitation.

Microplastics Are Everywhere

Less prominent in the plastic narrative are emerging questions over microplastic pollution in food, air, soil, and water, and the safety of chemical additives in plastic food packaging.

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Orb Media produces original research and reporting on issues that impact billions of people, uniquely fusing together original research, global data analysis, field reporting and an engaged public to deliver an accurate global picture of our interdependent world. orbmedia.org/theplasticquestion.

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