

Position Paper on Plastics – Avfall Sverige

Plastic is a versatile material used in various applications and products. It combines characteristics such as flexibility, light weight and moldability. However, production and use of plastics, as well as waste treatment of plastics, are associated with negative environmental, social and health aspects ranging from resource consumption to littering of land and water. Plastic products may contain environmentally harmful and hazardous substances. Moreover, plastics are mainly derived from fossil oil. Hence, there is an ongoing societal debate on the use of fossil-based plastics and how the usage can and should be limited. Studies and research on plastics are currently being carried out in the EU and in Sweden.

Avfall Sverige believes that plastics should be used where best fitted, so that as much consumed plastics as possible can be reused and recycled, and that the dependency on fossil oil for production is gradually reduced. Globally, it is imperative that proper waste management is organised to ensure that plastic waste is collected for treatment. As well as preventing waste ending up in waterways and rivers, which are the primary sources of plastic pollution in the oceans.

Avfall Sverige also believes that:

- Plastic product should be substituted to other materials where appropriate and sustainable,
- The use of plastics in disposable products are limited through bans, taxes and fees,
- The use of plastics in single-use disposable products are limited to functions where necessary, e.g. in various healthcare applications,
- Oxo-biodegradable plastics should be avoided, except in viable plastic products in healthcare,
- The presence of environmentally harmful and hazardous substances, e.g. substances with hormone-destructive properties, in plastic products should be completely phased out by 2030,
- Plastic in food waste should be minimized.

- The share of bioplastics, from sustainable resources, should gradually increase and make up at least 10 % of all plastic materials by 2030.
- More emphasis and demand on design and use of appropriate materials should be implemented in order to enable full circularity of materials.
- By participating in international standardisation work, increase overall potential of material recycling through standardising material use and recycling processes.
- All plastic products should be designed for reuse and/or material recycling by 2030 (not only packaging),
- Producers are held responsible for designing products enabling reuse and/or recycling,
- All costs, environmental and societal, associated with production, usage and recovering of consumed plastics, should be ascribed the production of plastics through extended producer responsibility.
- New additional deposit systems should be introduced in order to enable more reuse of plastic products as well as to ensure a high collection rate for recycling,
- At least 65 % of the plastic materials in products shall be recycled (material recycling) by 2025 and 70 % by 2030,
- The market for recycled plastics, free from environmentally harmful and hazardous substances, should be stimulated by introducing requirements for minimum content ratio of recycled plastics in new products,
- Carbon dioxide emissions, stemming from plastics, emitted via energy recovery or material recycling processes, should be ascribed plastic as a material. hence to the production phase, and
- Plastics containing environmentally harmful and hazardous substances, that are neither suited for reuse nor material recycling, should be thermally treated through energy recovery.