

# The Drop

FALL 2021







The Surfrider Foundation is committed to fostering a just, equitable, diverse and inclusive organization for all people who protect and enjoy the world's ocean, waves and beaches.

Our success and impact depend on learning from our community, standing in solidarity with our allies and working toward a more just future, both for our organization and the environmental movement as a whole.



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# Creating Systemic Change

We are at a critical moment in time where the issues we face have never been more urgent, but also a time where our potential for positive change has never been more possible. Plastic pollution, climate change and our failing coastal infrastructure, like wastewater treatment plants, require urgent action. The scale of these issues requires that we make systemic changes.

It's not enough to do beach cleanups or recycle, we must fundamentally shift our use of plastic to eliminate single-use plastics at the source where it's produced and do that at a national scale. It's not enough to only fight coastal armoring, we know the ocean is at the center of our climate challenge and can also be part of the solution. It's not enough to ensure beach access paths remain open, we must also create change in the composition of our coastal and ocean recreation communities. Our ocean, waves and beaches are public commons to be shared by all and we must combat the historic and current racism that prevents everyone from feeling welcome at the beach or in the waves.

In this issue, you will meet some of the incredible coastal defenders who are working in their communities and

throughout the nation to create systemic change. That includes advancing the federal Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) bills, and working with partners that are committed to zero waste. Additionally, it includes supporting the Ocean-Based Climate Solutions Act to ensure our ocean and coasts can play a role in mitigating climate impacts. It also includes supporting and learning from organizations, like Color the Water, and people like David Malana, who are committed to racial equity through actions that are centered around creating a surf culture that creates a sense of safety, belonging and freedom for people of color.

Thank you for your invaluable support of the Surfrider Foundation. Our achievements are only possible because of individuals like you. We are committed to shifting the paradigm to ensure clean water and healthy beaches for everyone. Forever.

For our ocean, waves and beaches,



Dr. Chad Nelsen  
Chief Executive Officer



# Fighting to Protect Our Coasts for All People

By: Pete Stauffer, Environmental Director

The American novelist James Lane Allen famously wrote, “Adversity does not build character, it reveals it.” This sentiment could not be more true of the Surfrider Foundation’s network over the past year and a half.

Along with the rest of the world, Surfrider has navigated the challenges of advancing our mission in the midst of a public health pandemic. Our grassroots network responded to these realities with innovation and grit. We also addressed new threats, such as safe beach access and the increase of plastic trash in our environment, through virtual outreach and advocacy. Now, as the U.S. cautiously returns to a semblance of normalcy, Surfrider is pleased to report that as of August, we have reopened our volunteer programs and have returned to hosting a variety of in-person events.

Surfrider has arguably emerged stronger from these challenges with new capabilities at our disposal. The timing of this growth could not be better as our coasts and ocean are facing unprecedented threats from pollution, development and climate change. To meet the moment, Surfrider is elevating its campaign advocacy at all levels of government. Through August, Surfrider’s network has already won 51 victories in 2021 to protect our ocean, waves and beaches. These constitute government decisions at local, state and federal levels that will

protect our coastal environment now and in the future.

At the federal level, Surfrider is urging the Biden administration and Congress to strengthen laws and policies that protect our coasts. We are uniting our grassroots network through national campaigns that make a real difference for our coastal environment and the communities that depend on it. Our priorities include working to pass the Ocean-Based Climate Solutions Act and the Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act, which are two forward-thinking legislative proposals designed to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Surfrider is also advocating for coastal management and clean water program funding in both the federal 2022 budget and the infrastructure package that is under consideration in Congress.

In March, Surfrider’s network took our federal priorities to Washington, D.C., as part of our largest-ever Coastal Recreation Hill Day. Nearly 200 Surfrider members, industry leaders and world-class surfers met virtually with 163 congressional offices and the Biden administration to ask our federal elected officials to take positive action on behalf of our coasts. Surfrider’s Hill Day efforts included regional delegations, which represented 25 of the nation’s 32 coastal states and territories. While politics continue to dominate the narrative in Washington, D.C.,



President Biden signed an executive order earlier this year to tackle the climate crisis with bold commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, strengthen coastal resilience and protect 30% of land and ocean habitats by 2030.

Surfrider’s focus remains on building bipartisan leadership to protect our coastal ecosystems and the public’s ability to enjoy these resources.

Fortunately, there are encouraging signs that federal leaders are responding to Surfrider’s network and other coastal advocates. President Biden signed an executive order earlier this year to tackle the climate crisis with bold commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, strengthen coastal resilience and protect 30% of land and ocean habitats by 2030. Meanwhile, the House of Representatives and the Senate have already passed bills to increase funding for clean water infrastructure improvements. Much work remains to be done in the 117th Congress and Surfrider will continue to engage our supporters in strategic efforts to pass legislation.

Surfrider is also making our impact felt at state and local levels and is advancing

policies to address plastic pollution, climate change, harmful development and sewage overflows. In Maine, Virginia and Washington, Surfrider helped to pass new state laws to curb plastic pollution through proactive approaches. In California, Hawai’i, Texas and Florida, Surfrider won major statewide victories to protect coastal resources and public access opportunities. At the grassroots level, Surfrider’s chapter network continues to pace our advocacy efforts with 27 local victories through August in 2021.

While we’re encouraged by the significant progress we have made on these and other issues, we also understand that our work is far from being done. We invite you to join our efforts to protect our ocean, waves and beaches for the future.

To get involved, find a nearby Surfrider chapter at [surfrider.org/chapters](https://surfrider.org/chapters) or support Surfrider’s volunteer coastal defenders at [surfrider.org/support-surfrider](https://surfrider.org/support-surfrider).

# Achieving Zero Waste

By: Arnaud Meysselle, CEO of REN Clean Skincare

## Tell us how you first became involved in ocean and coastal protection and what inspired you to take action.

I joined REN Clean Skincare as CEO in 2017. I loved the brand's heritage and positioning of high performance skincare with clinically proven results, thanks to nature's most powerful and kindest ingredients. Since its launch in 2000, the brand has had a basic recycling process in place that encourages customers to return empty containers to be recycled. I wanted to use this original founding principle, which REN started before others were doing the same thing, and take it a step further. So in 2018, I oversaw the initiation of the brand's Zero Waste Pledge to produce only packaging designed to be recyclable, reusable or to contain recyclable materials by the end of 2021.

A chance meeting in Santa Monica, California, with Dr. Chad Nelsen left me fully inspired to take action! Chad then made an introduction that would help REN facilitate the production of our Atlantic Kelp Body Wash pack made with recycled plastic. Working with these activists highlighted the need to support the protection of healthy beaches, waterways and the ocean.

## Is there a specific issue you see as the most pressing threat to our ocean and planet?

Often viewed as a 'dirty secret of the beauty industry,' 122 billion single-use sample packets reach landfills or are incinerated every year. As a result, we stopped making them in 2018. This year, we were able to break new sustainability ground after pioneering the launch of the world's first sample tube made from 100% recycled aluminum.



**Every innovation launched is now zero waste as we work to prevent our products from ending up in landfills, which is the ultimate mission.**

## Can you tell us about your journey with REN and how the brand has evolved and stayed true to its core values – Clean to Skin, Clean to Planet?

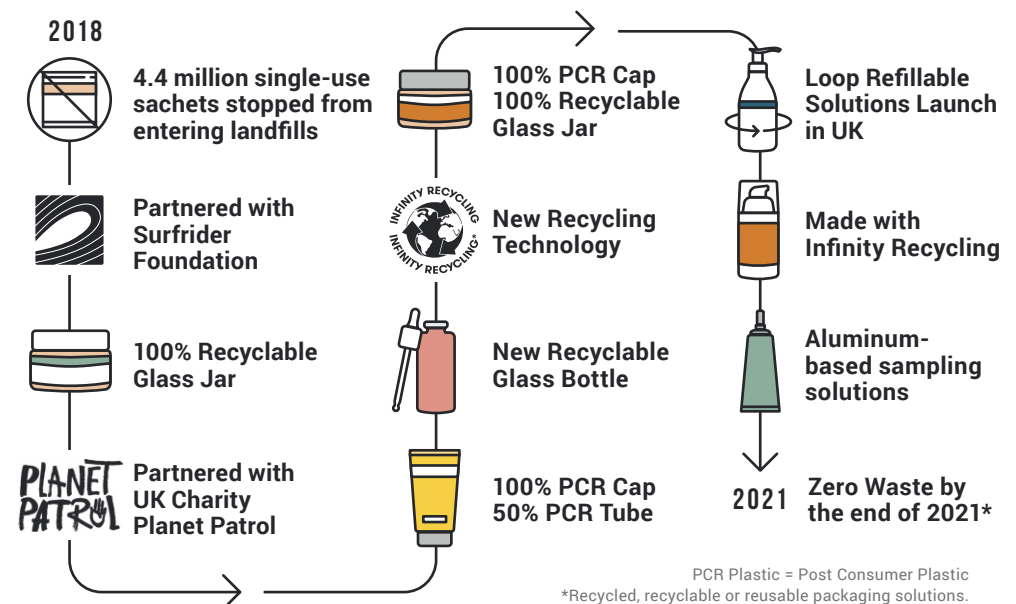
From the start, clean formulas with sustainably-sourced ingredients were at the heart of REN and this clean ethos has extended to include our packaging and the partnerships we undertake. Sustainability is a constant journey and partnering with other organizations helps us to innovate beauty industry solution firsts, such as ocean plastic packaging and aluminum samples, to reach our Zero Waste Pledge. Our partnership with the Surfrider Foundation helps to create change in local communities and extend wider conversation about environmentalism.

Our pledge to be zero waste by the end of 2021 is on track, which is incredible when considering everything that has happened in the world over the last 18 months! Every innovation launched is now zero waste as we

work to prevent our products from ending up in landfills, which is the ultimate mission. However, while launching new innovations is one thing, the real challenge comes when transitioning existing product portfolios to solutions with zero waste. Today, we are at 68% in terms of waste reduction and the needle is moving every month. By the end of December 2021, we aim to be at 100% zero waste. Communicating each step of our journey will continue to be key because these days, transparency is everything. It's a massive undertaking but we are showing great progress and it's exciting. Remaining connected at a grassroots level with the teams doing the work in the trenches and being challenged by them is essential.

We have given ourselves tough goals to reach but our entire organization is passionate about achieving them. It's why we all get up in the morning – we are working to be part of the change we want to see in the world.

## Our Journey to Zero Waste





**Can you tell us about your efforts leading the REN team in pioneering new, innovative solutions to industry-wide practices to help lead the industry in a more sustainable direction?**

It's not just the big beauty industry innovation firsts that make an impact, it's also the smaller, less attention-grabbing changes that can make a real difference. For example, by changing the dispense mechanism on one of our products from a pump to a pour cap, we estimate saving 9.5 tons of plastic in 2021 alone.

As part of our journey to zero waste, we have also teamed up with another organization to reduce our shipping materials. Sustainable, reusable packaging is the future of shipping and e-commerce. One of the biggest challenges with packaging is that something that is recyclable in one town may not be 20 miles away. Offering our consumers simple, reusable boxes when shopping with REN Clean Skincare will help to reduce environmental impacts by up to 75% when compared to single-use packaging. We take a holistic approach to sustainability and look forward to continuing to make changes around products, ingredients and packaging to bring more solution firsts to the beauty consumer.

We hope that by pioneering these technologies that are often more costly, we can encourage other businesses to make sustainable solutions more accessible in the future.

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**Why has it been important to REN to engage your community in grassroots volunteerism and activism?**

We can't save the planet alone. To mark Earth Day 2021, we launched our industry-defying #WeAreAllies campaign, partnering with four competitors: Biossance, Caudalie, Herbivore and Youth To The People. The campaign has each brand undertake its own packaging pledge in a collective effort that shows solidarity in the face of environmental crises. It also provides practical benefits, such as sharing eco-tech innovations and best practices for the greater good. This international campaign calls upon customers, if not shopping with us, to choose our competitors that have sustainable packaging initiatives in place in a joint effort to reduce packaging waste in the beauty industry. It also encourages people to realize that how they choose to spend their income creates the changes they want.



REN and Surfrider host a beach cleanup in Santa Monica with ally brands to celebrate the launch of their #WeAreAllies campaign, a collective effort to reduce packaging waste in the beauty industry. Photos: Shelly Simon

**What has been a highlight of your experiences related to the protection of the ocean and coasts?**

Seeing our first #WeAreAllies Beach Cleanup with the Surfrider Foundation at Santa Monica Beach was a real high point and true example of longtime partners and once-competitor allies coming together to tackle a greater goal. Collecting waste from our coastline helps to prevent it from entering (or re-entering) our ocean, washing

up on shores, entering water systems or endangering animals. There's no silver bullet to sustainability but with a united vision to tackle the environmental crisis of packaging waste, we can all contribute to a cleaner planet. It is a constant journey and while our Zero Waste Pledge may be due to be reached by the end of this year, we are currently researching our next initiative to reduce waste in the beauty industry and we're excited to be able to share it soon in 2022.

# New Legislation Leverages the Ocean to Combat the Climate Crisis

By: Stefanie Sekich-Quinn, Coastal Preservation Manager

Congress and the Biden administration have a unique opportunity to finally put forward feasible solutions to help solve one of the biggest existential threats facing humanity — the climate crisis. Fortunately, they are putting forth climate policies that are desperately needed. In June, Congressman Raúl Grijalva and dozens of other congressional representatives introduced the Ocean-Based Climate Solutions Act (OBCSA) of 2021.

The official introduction of the OBCSA bill comes at a critical time as climate change continues to wreak havoc across the globe. This piece of legislation is particularly exciting for coastal advocates because it dovetails with recent executive orders and proposals by the Biden administration to curtail climate change and protect our ocean and coastal communities.

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Before the OBCSA bill was officially introduced, we elevated this type of legislation as a top priority for Surfrider's 2021 Coastal Recreation Hill Day, where we met with more than 160 congressional offices in support of coastal protection. The innovative package put forth by Congressman Grijalva provides substantive solutions and generates pathways to create hundreds of thousands of new jobs.

For example, the OBCSA bill authorizes \$10 billion to support coastal restoration projects. Not only will these projects help to stimulate the economy, but natural infrastructure programs will also help coastal communities to adapt to sea level rise. In addition, the bill requires a coordinated federal response to support the voluntary relocation of communities facing health, safety and environmental impacts from climate change events, including hurricanes, flooding, sea level rise and wildfires.



The OBCSA will help to combat the climate crisis by creating coastal restoration projects to protect communities from sea level rise, contribute to the transition to renewable energy sources, protect blue carbon ecosystems and much more.

Greenhouse gas emissions are the biggest contributor to climate change. While the U.S. is behind on implementing clean energy, this bill will help the country to transition to renewable energy sources. This includes well-planned and sited offshore renewables, such as wind and tidal energy. Most importantly, the bill would prohibit new offshore oil exploration and drilling.

The OBCSA legislation boldly aims to tackle major issues, such as ocean acidification and harmful algal blooms. It also reduces the impacts of pollution by establishing a manufacturer's fee on virgin single-use plastic production. In addition, the bill intends to protect 'blue carbon' ecosystems like salt marshes, sea grasses and mangroves. These ecosystems absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and safely store it at a rate of up to four times the amount retained by forests on land. In addition, they protect coastal communities by limiting the impacts of



Photo: Kilby Photo

coastal erosion, flooding and storms, while also providing habitats for marine wildlife and fisheries.

Advancing environmental justice is a cornerstone of this legislation. The OBCSA bill focuses on helping underserved communities to ensure climate change planning is just, equitable, respects diversity and creates good-paying jobs that will benefit all communities. The legislation also sets up a grant program that advances best practices for increased coastal resiliency and adaptation by prioritizing Indigenous knowledge and expertise.

Surfrider is hopeful that this meaningful climate legislation will make its way through Congress and be signed into law by the Biden administration. Please visit our website to sign an **action alert** urging Congress to pass this critical legislation.



# Shifts in the Plastic Pollution Paradigm

By: Miho Ligare, Plastic Pollution Policy Coordinator

Addressing plastic pollution is a core pillar of the Surfrider Foundation's mission and we have been a leader in tackling this issue for over a decade. To date, Surfrider has achieved more than 300 plastic pollution victories to protect the ocean and coasts. We have successfully advocated for laws to ban or regulate single-use plastics, including bags, straws and expanded polystyrene, at both local and state levels. We're also working on refining ordinance structures to incorporate environmental justice concerns and drive a plastic pollution paradigm shift.

Increasingly, people are learning that the entire lifecycle of plastic is harming our communities and environment. From extraction and production to consumption

and disposal, plastics also disproportionately impact low-income and frontline communities. The need for urgent action to reduce plastic pollution is undeniably clear and it needs to happen now.

With this holistic view of plastic pollution in mind, there are exciting policies that Surfrider is helping to lead and we're gaining traction to comprehensively address the issue.

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Plastic is problematic throughout its whole lifecycle – from the point of raw material extraction to its eventual disposal and dispersion. Roughly two-thirds of all plastic ever produced remains in the environment today.



EPR laws can lead to significant reductions in single-use plastic because the producers bear the responsibility for the cost of recycling, waste disposal and the cleanup of their packaging.

## Extended Producer Responsibility: Making Producers Pay

Part of the solution to ending single-use plastic pollution is the introduction of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) legislation. This concept is important because it transfers the financial burden from taxpayers to manufacturers, brands and producers. It also incentivizes the use of packaging materials other than plastic. As a national leader, Surfrider has been working to help develop groundbreaking EPR bills and provide critical support to drive legislation forward in multiple states and at the federal level this year.

In July, Maine became the first U.S. state to adopt an EPR law for packaging. In a 2019 report, Maine's Department of

Environmental Protection estimated that it costs the state's municipalities between \$16 million and \$17.5 million each year to manage packaging waste through recycling or disposal. The Maine Chapter and our Northeast Regional Manager worked with the Natural Resources Council of Maine and organizations from all over the world to build the groundswell of support that was critical in pushing back against big corporate polluters to win this campaign.

Maine is leading the way to reduce single-use plastic and other wasteful packaging. It also serves as a model for other states considering EPR legislation, including California, Hawai'i, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Vermont and Washington.



## Federal Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act

Another innovative piece of legislation at the federal level is the Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act (BFFPPA), which was reintroduced by Senator Jeff Merkley and Representative Alan Lowenthal. Surfrider has been involved with BFFPPA since its inception and continues to be heavily engaged with helping to move this bill forward.

What makes the federal BFFPPA so unique is that it addresses plastic pollution across its lifecycle and recognizes that we cannot

recycle our way out of this problem.

Plastic impacts not only ocean and public health, but also racial and environmental injustice. This piece of legislation provides a comprehensive approach to decreasing plastic pollution and includes EPR policies, improvements to recycling infrastructure and ways to reduce unnecessary plastic packaging.

The bill also focuses on the source reduction of plastic bags, straws, utensils, produce stickers and foam foodware. In addition, it highlights the need to transition away from single-use products and toward reusables.

## Here's what the Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act will accomplish:



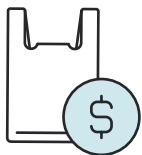
**Strengthen Environmental Justice**



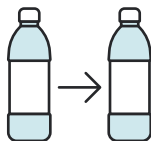
**Test Reuse and Refill Programs**



**Hold Companies Accountable / Create Transparency**



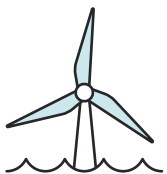
**Incentivize Good Design**



**Require Real Recycling**



**Reduce the Toxins**



**Reduce Pollution**



**Reduce Single-Use**



**Manage Our Own Waste**

## What You Can Do

As exciting as these policies are, we can't do it alone. We need your help to pass strong legislation and reduce single-use plastics at the source. Here are a few actions that we can all take to help tackle the plastic pollution crisis:

- Let your elected officials know you care about this issue and sign the Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act **action alert**.
- Join a beach cleanup as the data collected helps to inform direct legislative actions to reduce pollution.
- Help sign up and support Ocean Friendly Restaurants, which incorporate environmentally friendly practices and demonstrate that these policies work.
- Engage with your local Surfrider Foundation chapter, club or plastic pollution programs.
- Ask yourself, "Do I need this?" and "Is there a better alternative to single-use plastic?" We can cut back on excess and focus on using what we have.

If executed thoughtfully, not only will we improve our communities and environment, but we will also have the opportunity to advance environmental justice. Together, we can advocate for stronger, more inclusive legislation that shifts communities away from single-use items and addresses plastic pollution at the source.

**We need your help to pass strong legislation and reduce single-use plastics at the source.**



You can help by joining a beach cleanup as the data collected helps to inform direct legislative actions to reduce pollution.

# Protecting the Coasts for All People

By: Chris Casey, Membership Manager

"Excuse me, may I ask you a question?" said the man sitting nearby in his beach chair. "I see all of you picking something up and putting it in your bags, but I can't see what it is you're picking up."

"Microplastics," I replied. "There are plenty of larger items, like cigarette butts, bottle caps and straws, but a great deal of what we're picking up are tiny bits of plastic."

It was a beautiful July morning in California and the Surfrider Huntington / Seal Beach Chapter was hosting a beach cleanup as

part of a local event. So my wife, Jennifer, and I hopped on bikes and pedaled down to join in and pick up some trash from the sand.

Beach cleanups play an important role in Surfrider's mission to protect our ocean, waves and beaches for all people. In fact, our 2020 Beach Cleanup Report highlights that 927 beach cleanups took place just last year, which resulted in the removal of more than 80,000 pounds of trash, including plastic fragments, from our coasts, neighborhoods and waterways.



In 2020, 927 beach cleanups took place, resulting in the removal of more than 80,000 pounds of trash from our coasts, neighborhoods and waterways.



In 2020, the second most commonly found items at beach cleanups were tiny plastic fragments smaller than a dime.

Regardless of whether people live inland or near the coast, the fact that the ocean and beaches belong to all of us is a core tenet of Surfrider's mission – as is the responsibility of protecting them. Our volunteers do this on a daily basis and are able to impact those around them, even when away from home. For example, the Freeman-Garcia family from San Luis Obispo, CA, spent some of their valuable vacation time in Kauai this summer making their destination better than when they arrived. They picked up a beach cleanup kit from a hotel that participates in the local chapter's Ocean Friendly Visitor program to help reduce plastic and protect the coastal environment for all people to enjoy.

Between the impressive amount of trash collected by volunteers and the ways that Surfrider can use this data to create large-

scale change, it can be easy to overlook a critical component of cleanups – the people. Beach cleanups are about more than just removing trash as they also create interactions between those who came to enjoy the beach and those who are leading by example and cleaning it up.

"Usually you can no longer even tell what these tiny plastic fragments once were," I told the man watching our beach cleanup. "But when you look closely at the sand, their bright colors jump right out at you."

"Thank you," he replied. "I'll look more closely."

"And checkout Surfrider," I shouted back as I continued down the beach, racing to beat my wife to the piece of plastic we both spotted as we worked side by side to protect the coast for the future.

**Regardless of whether people live inland or near the coast, the fact that the ocean and beaches belong to all of us is a core tenet of Surfrider's mission.**





SUPPORTED BY: **CLIF**

## Join The Better Beach Alliance

Beach cleanups are a great way to get outdoors and get involved in making a positive impact in your community – not just on your own local beaches, but helping to influence future legislation to protect our coastlines nationwide.

Learn more at: [cleanups.surfrider.org](http://cleanups.surfrider.org)





# Plastic-Free Salish Sea and Washington Coast

By: Liz Schotman, Washington Regional Manager,  
and Gus Gates, Washington Policy Manager

The Surfrider Foundation and our partners in the Plastic Free Washington / Washington Sin Plástico Coalition celebrated this year as the Washington state governor, Jay Inslee, signed into law a major piece of legislation that will help to tackle the plastic pollution crisis. This bill, which had bipartisan support, would not have been possible without the on-the-ground

activism and outreach from our Washington chapters and the collaborative efforts of our partner organizations. Surfrider volunteers raised awareness through chapter meetings and presentations, hosted beach cleanups and collected essential data that told a powerful story of the need for these policies. In addition, our network contacted state legislators to demand this important action.



The Surfrider Foundation and our partners in the Plastic Free Washington / Washington Sin Plástico Coalition celebrated this May as Governor Jay Inslee signed into law SB5022.

This plastic pollution policy, which is one of the most comprehensive in the nation, has four main components:

## Forget the Foam

As foam fragments have made it into the Surfrider Foundation Washington chapters' top five items collected from local beaches each year, our volunteers couldn't be happier that Washington is now the sixth in the nation to adopt a statewide ban on expanded polystyrene foam products. Not only does this bill address foam packing peanuts and food service products, but it is also the first in the country to ban recreational foam coolers, making this the stongest statewide expanded polystyrene foam ban in the U.S.

## Minimum Recycled Content

Washington's new bill mandates a minimum amount of post-consumer recycled content to be included in more types of products than any other bill requires to date. In addition to beverage bottles, Washington is the first in the nation to require a minimum amount of recycled materials to be incorporated into the packaging of household cleaning and personal care products, such as laundry detergent, spray cleaners, shampoos, conditioners and lotions.

## Single-Use Plastics Available Only By Request

This bill is also the first in the nation to make utensils, straws, cup lids and condiments available by customer request only. Single-use plastic foodware comprises eight of the top 10 items we often find during our beach cleanups in Washington state. However, the majority of takeout is generally eaten at home or at work, where reusable utensils are readily available. By requiring people to ask for the items that they need, we can drastically reduce the amount of plastic entering our waterways.



Foam fragments have made it into the Surfrider Foundation Washington chapters' top five items collected from local beaches each year.

## Reducing Wishful Recycling by Removing the Chasing Arrows Mandate

Local communities often bear the financial burden of dealing with plastic waste. Many of the items that enter recycling facilities are not actually recyclable, resulting in contaminated waste streams and increased costs. A contributing factor to this 'wishful recycling' is the chasing arrows symbol, which misleads people into attempting to recycle non-recyclable items. The new Washington law removes the chasing arrows requirement for plastic containers.

While this bill is a huge step forward in the management of plastic packaging in Washington state, more efforts are underway to carry this momentum forward and continue our fight for a plastic-free Salish Sea and Washington coast.



# Refill For Good with Hydro Flask

By: Rachael Cushing, Partnerships Coordinator

Since 2009, Hydro Flask products have been companions for outdoor enthusiasts, providing insulated hydration to fuel every adventure from the ocean and coasts to the mountains. Originally conceived on the shores of Hawai'i, Hydro Flask has always focused on cleaner beaches and waterways, which is what inspired its pursuit to replace single-use plastics with endlessly reusable alternatives. Today, the company is dedicated to helping people attain healthier, happier lives while spending time outdoors. It is also committed to championing environmentally-conscious decisions by supporting the Surfrider Foundation's plastic pollution initiative through a limited-edition collection of reusable Hydro Flask bottles.

In July 2020, Hydro Flask's Refill For Good initiative launched with the goal of empowering people everywhere to choose reusable alternatives to the single-use items that we encounter in our daily lives, whether we're hitting the trail or on a coffee run. The campaign aims to combat plastic pollution by creating a platform to encourage and share simple, achievable actions to help curb our single-use plastic consumption.

"Now is the perfect time to take action with more mindful choices for ourselves and

the planet," said professional surfer and chemist, Dr. Cliff Kapono, who serves as a member of Surfrider's Board of Directors and as a Hydro Flask Refill For Good Advocate. "Avoiding single-use plastic water bottles and containers is an easy step we all can take. I'm stoked to celebrate this partnership and help motivate others to make the switch and #RefillForGood."

In early 2021, Hydro Flask conducted a national survey to measure the impact of COVID-19 on the consumption of single-use plastics. It showed that during the pandemic, 67% of respondents had reverted to using single-use plastic items even though 97% said they owned at least one refillable product.

"The jump in consumption of single-use products was eye-opening," said Indigo Teiwes, Director of Corporate Responsibility for Helen of Troy's Housewares Division, which includes Hydro Flask. "That's why it's more important than ever to encourage people to make the switch to a sustainable solution right now and why we're especially proud to support Surfrider's plastic pollution initiative. Together, we can help curb the wave of single-use plastic waste – enabling healthier, happier and more fulfilled lives outdoors for people everywhere."

**Avoiding single-use plastic water bottles and containers is an easy step we all can take.**



Hydro Flask launched its Refill For Good initiative to empower people everywhere to choose reusable alternatives to the single-use bottles and containers that pollute global green spaces, waters and landfills.



# Jennie Romer

## **Why and when did you get involved with the Surfrider Foundation?**

I first got involved with Surfrider after college doing beach cleanups in San Francisco. At the end of law school, I got to know the Surfrider Foundation's powerhouse Legal Director, Angela Howe, when I began working on plastic pollution reduction policy. I was impressed by the work of Angela and the Surfrider network and consulted on projects for a few years. Two years ago, I was able to join the Surfrider staff as a Legal Associate with the plastic pollution initiative.

## **What are some local issues that are affecting your ocean, waves and beaches?**

Plastic pollution is a big issue here in New York City. My work, including the website I founded, PlasticBagLaws.org, has been instrumental in the adoption of a plastic bag law in New York, which is the main reason why I moved to the city nine years ago. New York City has also adopted foam and straw laws and now we're working on other foodware legislation.

## **What has been the highlight of your Surfrider experience?**

A huge highlight has been the introduction of the Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act (BFFPPA), which is comprehensive federal legislation to address the plastic pollution crisis. At Surfrider, we were involved with helping to craft the legislation from the beginning and I spoke at the rally introducing the bill. Around that same time, I was invited to testify before Congress in support of a bill to ban single-use plastic

water bottles at national parks, which was really exciting. I'm also proud of the plastic bag and foodware policy toolkits that we've released to help others get involved and take action.

## **What are some other projects you've been working on related to the protection of the coasts?**

I have recently been working on Producer Responsibility laws to hold manufacturers responsible for plastic pollution. In April of this year, I also published my book, *Can I Recycle This?: A Guide to Better Recycling and How to Reduce Single-Use Plastics*. While the book is about the logistics of recycling, the main take-home message is that the majority of single-use plastic is not recyclable and we really need to reduce consumption.

## **What is the most important thing you tell others about Surfrider?**

I feel so lucky to be able to provide policy guidance to our incredible network of volunteers and work closely with several of them. Our volunteers are the ones who show up at local hearings and push their legislators to adopt so many plastic reduction bills. I love working with people who share a passion for protecting and enjoying the ocean. The emphasis on enjoyment really sets Surfrider apart.

**I love working with people who share a passion for protecting and enjoying the ocean.**





# Color the Water

By: David Malana, Co-Founder

## Can you tell us about Color the Water, and why you founded the organization?

Our mission at Color the Water is to fight racism and create ocean equity. The main way we do this is through free surf lessons for Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) communities. Whether it's learning to swim in the ocean, getting on a board on your belly or knees and just riding waves, standing up and surfing for the first time, or leveling up through coaching and media analysis, we want to be that support that people of color need to enjoy the ocean, particularly the surf, in ways that have been inaccessible for all sorts of reasons. On top of surf instruction, we also strive to be a part of education and media representation that helps to create a surf culture that is truly inclusive, diverse and equitable, which in the end is better for us all.

As a Filipino American surfer, a former ball player, a hip-hop, R&B, neo-soul music lover, and someone who has benefited from and enjoyed Black culture my whole life, I felt like I had to do something after seeing the brutality and racism that was on full display after the death of George Floyd. So I went to a paddle out and the scene was surreal. It was mostly white people with surfboards adorned with fists, Black Lives Matter and airbrushes of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor. So many of these people seemed to know each other and be happy to see one another – it felt almost festive. Then there was a very small contingency of people of color, most of whom seemed to have come alone like myself, in a distinctly less festive

mood, some of whom couldn't even paddle out because the surf was rough and they weren't familiar enough with the ocean.

I volunteered to film it all, so I was both observing and participating. I remember thinking, "This can't be it. This can't be the only thing I do to fight racism." I'd been surfing for almost 20 years and it wasn't until that moment that I realized the blinders I had put on myself to enjoy the ocean. The acceptance of the hierarchy and meritocracy of surfing, the adherence to cultural surf norms, the inequity of coastal life that is a product of the design of generations before and the systemic racism that has flown under the radar in surfing. I promised myself that I would take off those blinders and see if I could help people of color get into the ocean and on these waves, in ways that embraced all of who they are and with a culture that we could form together.

I started giving surf lessons and then @black surfers began sharing some of our social media, other surfers started bringing their people, Lizelle Jackson came on and helped with teaching, and now we are co-founders of this whole nonprofit!

Some of our original learners are Board members and more than 700 people have signed up to learn, contribute, commune and create a surf culture that is based on anti-racist ideals like acceptance and celebration, sharing and compassion, acknowledgement and respect, and intention toward true liberation, in and out of the water.



Color the Water aims to fight racism and create ocean equity through free surf lessons for Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) communities. Top Photo: Jae Bella, Bottom Photos: John Suhar

## How and when did you begin working with the Surfrider Foundation?

Last year, the Surfrider LA Chapter connected with us about coordinating with their One Watershed program to help some of our surfers receive instruction in large group settings. It was a really special occasion that would have become more if not for our eventual collective COVID-19 pauses. The chapter also had a project with an artist and fellow surfer, DJ Javier. He believes in ocean equity and his art speaks to his influences and beliefs in that regard. So many people have become friends and allies in this struggle against racism and I

can say honestly that without this Surfrider connection, we wouldn't be quite where we are today. We are humbled and proud to be in partnership with the Surfrider LA Chapter team because they've really lent their expertise, but more importantly, they have listened and learned from us about what it means to do this work. We couldn't be more grateful for the role they play in this and we hope to continue to learn and grow with them as we develop institutionalized anti-racism and a liberated surf culture that respects each other as well as the ocean that gives us so many gifts.



### How does your organization work to create a surf culture that is welcoming to all people?

Since our mission is racial equity, our intention and actions are centered around creating a surf culture that creates a sense of safety, belonging and freedom for people of color. Not just diversity and representation – we want genuine equity that is inclusive of all people of all identities. That is our mission, that is why we are called Color the Water. The way we achieve that ends up being beneficial to everyone in the water. We see the ocean as more like a playground and it's one we need to take better care of as a social and environmental space. So when we surf, we practice what we think better resembles actual etiquette, which is defined as customary codes of polite behavior. So, we share waves. If someone is trying, we do our best to help

and celebrate them, regardless of things like style or performance. If someone drops in on us, we don't justify aggression or collision but instead work on our top turns and cut backs instead of running into them and then reassure them that there are plenty of waves to go around. If someone is aggressive toward us, we come together to support the person attacked and instead of seeking revenge, we focus our energy on supporting each other and making sure we are safe and cared for. This extends to those around us, regardless of identity, especially for beginners who are just trying to learn and enjoy the ocean. We defy a surf culture that was appropriated from ancient people of color and then commodified and colonized all those centuries ago, and instead connect to what we believe is a truer version of what surfing could be – compassionate, inclusive, joyful and explicitly anti-racist.

### Congrats on winning an LA2050 Grants Challenge this summer! How do you plan to use the \$50,000 grant to advance Color the Water's mission?

Thank you so much! Honestly, we are going to use the \$50,000 to continue to do exactly what we have been doing already, just with greater support. Lizelle and I, alongside some of our amazing volunteers and members, have given over \$100,000 of lessons over the past year for free and that does not include media, remote coaching, meetups or events. Without this grant, we probably would have had to scale down our operations but now we can continue in earnest, at full capacity. That means more people can get in the water, the people we already have can continue to grow toward autonomy, the community can be provided with additional safe spaces and resources to educate and build their surf knowledge,

and anti-racist awareness can be supported in their mental wellness and racial identity journeys. Every piece of this has grown organically and we want it to stay that way. As we grow, we also recognize the need for us to compensate the BIPOC community for their efforts that support us and to find ways to create at least a base level of sustainability as we strive to become self-sufficient as an institution and organization. Now, we have a chance to enrich the soil of our community and help these roots grow into something strong, beautiful and lasting. Thanks to Surfrider's support and partnership, we were able to apply for and earn this chance!

### Anything else you'd like to share?

More than anything, I want to express recognition and gratitude to all those who have helped us get here. From our parents, caregivers and ancestors, who came here from other countries to build a life that allows for this or who battled racism, to our Color the Water learners, who have been the life force of this entire thing and have been courageous in facing their fears of surfing, racism and discrimination, we thank you. To all those who have stepped into leadership and volunteer staff roles at Color the Water, it's been an honor to serve with you and I promise I'll do all I can to have us thrive. To Black women, who comprise the majority of our community and leadership and who time and again bear the brunt of the weight of the struggle and receive the least recognition, we are eternally indebted to you and will forever strive to truly honor your sacrifice. And to the genuine allies that we have, many of whom are part of the Surfrider team, who have rejected privilege and embraced the discomfort of dismantling racism, we appreciate you and look forward to continuing to fight racism with you, defiantly and joyfully.



Photo: John Suhar





## Gifts That Give Back

100% of the proceeds from our store directly fund our mission to protect our ocean, waves and beaches.

[shop.surfrider.org](https://shop.surfrider.org)





# Airrion Copeland

## Why and when did you get involved with the Surfrider Foundation?

I became a member of Surfrider many years ago and am currently on the national Board of Directors. I love the work that Surfrider has done to protect our coasts and as a surfer, I wanted to be part of an organization that truly drives change for a more sustainable environment and ocean culture.

## What are some local issues that are affecting your ocean, waves and beaches?

Plastic pollution is a growing problem. The effect that it has on our ocean, wildlife, land, air, communities, people and our health is unreal. It is critically important that we ban single-use plastics, create zero waste communities and work toward a circular economy.

## What Surfrider projects or committees do you work on?

I really enjoy the community work that Surfrider has been involved with lately, especially when it comes to beach access, equity, inclusion and diversity. These issues can't be ignored as they are no longer just relevant — they are self-evident. It will take a multicultural, community approach to be successful in stopping these detrimental effects on our ocean and coasts.

## What has been the highlight of your Surfrider experience?

Last year, after the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and many others, Surfrider organized several incredible panels and discussions to not only listen

and learn about these horrific events, but also to identify how the organization can adjust their work to include new insights for a better future. They even screened my documentary film, *White Wash*, a history of black surfers, for several chapters as a way to have conversations about social injustice within the surf community. It showed real leadership as an organization and I am excited about how we will continue to move the needle in this area.

## What is the most important thing you tell others about Surfrider?

We are a love-based organization. Everyone that I have encountered within the Surfrider community, whether it is a member or employee, shares a deep love and passion for the work. It is that interconnectedness that continues to bring our vision and mission to life.

## Why is it important to you to sit on the Board of Directors for Surfrider?

As a surfer of color and an activist, I can bring a unique voice to the Board of Directors to support and serve our mission. The broad spectrum of insight, experience and diversity that the Board brings is pretty amazing and I am humbled and honored to be a part of the team.

## Anything else you would like to add?

The ocean, like breath, is life. We need to value it as we do the air that we breathe. The ocean reflects who we are as a global community and it's time that we take a hard look at not only who we are, but also what we want to provide for future generations.





# Justine Yeung

## Why and when did you get involved with the Surfrider Foundation?

My parents grew up surrounded by the ocean in Hong Kong and they taught me how to snorkel in the Maldives when I was young. It horrified me when I realized that the pristine, colorful coral had turned bone white in a few short years during a mass coral bleaching event. I've been interested in marine conservation ever since.

I first learned about the Surfrider Foundation when I was working at Rockaway Brewing Co.

in New York, where Surfrider volunteers regularly swung by to pick up empty grain bags for beach cleanups. I loved feeling the excitement of the Surfrider folks and seeing their work in action.

After switching careers to graphic design in 2018, a friend forwarded me a posting by the New York City Chapter's Blue Water Task Force, asking for design help. I ended up drawing illustrations for the chapter's social media accounts to represent water testing results for local beaches.



## What are some local issues that are affecting the ocean, waves and beaches in your community?

I spend time between New York City and South Bay, Los Angeles, and clean water is something that is affected on both coasts. It's scary that we have to avoid going into the ocean after periods of rain in these urban areas. This summer, 17 million gallons of raw sewage spilled into the Santa Monica Bay after the water treatment plant was overwhelmed. I think that ensuring the proper infrastructure is in place for the future is huge.

Access to the beach itself is also affected by social, cultural and racial inequality. The past few years have really opened my eyes to seeing that everything is interconnected. Protecting the ocean isn't only about picking up trash or avoiding plastic. It's also about education and lifting up and embracing those who have not been given the same opportunities as others, so that we can all realize what we have and work together to save it.



## What has been the highlight of your experience working with Surfrider?

Last April, I was asked to create graphics to accompany several comment prompts that the New York City Chapter had prepared for a public comment period for the Williams Pipeline. That was a 23-mile long fracked gas pipeline that was proposed to run through the New York Harbor. The pipeline, which would have undoubtedly dumped toxins into nearby waters, was eventually denied its water quality permit in May 2020. It was an incredible feeling to be a very miniscule part of the years-long fight against the Williams Pipeline, and be surrounded (virtually) by such passionate and intelligent people.

## What is the most important thing you tell others about protecting the coasts?

While it's easy to be overwhelmed because there are so many problems to be solved, every little action helps. It's important to stay open-minded and always ready to learn.

# Coastal Victories Update

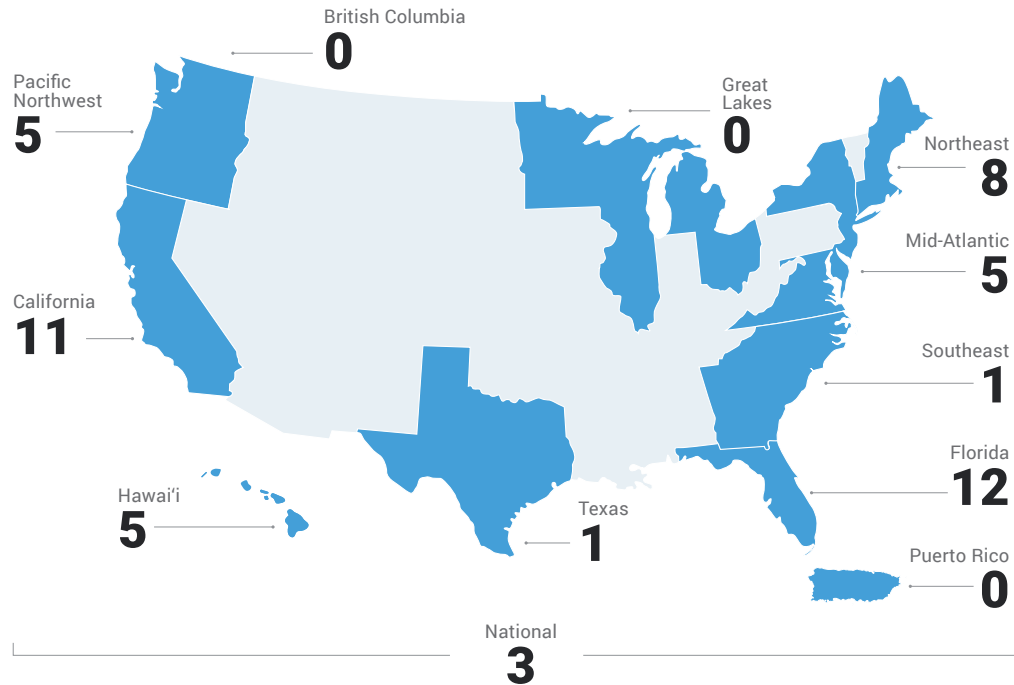
A coastal victory is a decision made in favor of the coastal and ocean environment that results in a positive conservation outcome, improves coastal access, or both.

For more information visit [surfrider.org/campaigns](https://surfrider.org/campaigns).

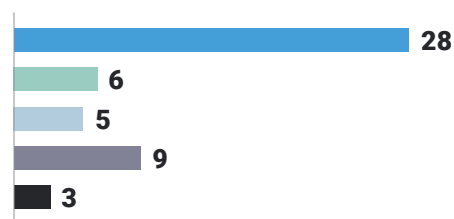
## 51

Total Victories as of August 2021

### VICTORY LOCATIONS

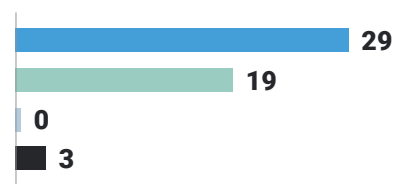


### VICTORY TYPE



● Plastic Pollution    ● Ocean Protection  
● Coastal Preservation    ● Clean Water  
● Beach Access

### VICTORY SCOPE



● Local    ● State  
● Regional    ● National



## Leave a Lasting Legacy

Help advance the protection of our ocean, waves and beaches for future generations. Contact us about Planned Giving.

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