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IS “BIODEGRADABLE” THE NEW GREENWASHING?

LOS ANGELES (March 2018)—Leading non-profit conservation organizations—5 Gyres Institute, Algalita, Californians Against Waste, Clean Production Action, Plastic Pollution Coalition, Responsible Purchasing Network, Story of Stuff, Surfrider Foundation and UPSTREAM—joined together on the Plastics BAN (Better Alternatives Now) List series of reports to identify the world’s most dangerous plastics in order to better protect our oceans. The most current report, Plastics BAN List 2.0, launched at the Global Wave Summit in Santa Cruz in March. This report also examines the true life cycle of “plant-based” plastic products, finding that most do not actually break down and that the terms “compostable” and “biodegradable” may be the next generation of greenwashing.

“BAN List 2.0 is both a snap shot of the top 20 plastic products polluting the land and waterways in the US, but also an in-depth look at the role of bioplastics in society,” said Marcus Eriksen, Co-Founder and Research Director at the 5 Gyres Institute, who was the primary author of the report.

The Plastics BAN List 2.0 includes data from across the United States, focusing on plastics that present the most significant chemical hazards in manufacturing, those that are the most dangerous when absorbed by humans and which persist longest in the environment. Items reported as top offenders include food wrappers, bottle caps, beverage bottles, bags, straws, and lids, made primarily from polypropylene, polyethylene and polystyrene plastics.

The 5 Gyres Institute targets polystyrene and expanded polystyrene foam—commonly known as “Styrofoam”—through its new “Nix the 6” action campaign to ban single-use polystyrene products.

Annually, eight million tons of plastic escapes collection systems to end up in the ocean, where it contributes to the 5.25 trillion particles of plastic smog that choke our marine ecosystems. The Plastics BAN List series provides a window into the true environmental and human health costs of plastics, and can be used to help corporations understand their responsibility to design less harmful products. The next Plastics BAN List will include international data and is set to release in 2019. The first version of the report launched in 2017 to support the successful California plastic bag ban Proposition 67.

MORE INFORMATION

www.5gyres.org
www.algalita.org
www.cawrecycles.org
www.cleanproduction.org
www.plasticpollutioncoalition.org

www.responsiblepurchasing.org
www.storyofstuff.org
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