



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

Gina M. Raimondo  
Governor

SECRETARY OF STATE  
2018 JUL 16 PM 2:10

EXECUTIVE ORDER

18-06

July 16, 2018

TACKLING PLASTICS

WHEREAS, plastic pollution is dangerous to the health of our oceans and ocean species, contributes to climate change, is a major component of unsightly litter both on our lands and in our waters, and as such is one of the most important issues facing Rhode Island;

WHEREAS, developing stronger plastics reduction policies at the state level, designed to reduce the use of plastics and single-use disposables, is a top goal of my administration;

WHEREAS, addressing plastics will have an important impact on the health and quality of our lands and waters, including our 400 miles of coastline;

WHEREAS, plastics that enter the marine environment break down through wave action and sunlight into smaller pieces called microplastics, which can be ingested by marine life, putting Rhode Island's fishing industries and aquatic ecosystems at risk;

WHEREAS, studies have shown that 75-80% of marine debris is plastic material and that most of it is from shoreline litter and disposal, and products of particular concern include single-use shopping bags, single-use beverage containers, six-pack rings, straws, and balloons;

WHEREAS, plastic bags and thin plastic films are the predominant contaminant of recycling loads in Rhode Island, causing equipment failures at the State's Materials Recycling Facility that drive up the cost of recycling and contributing to tons of valuable recycle materials having to be diverted to the central landfill;

WHEREAS, Rhode Island can and should be a leader on reducing and eventually eliminating plastics pollution, and with the geography and size of the state, an initiative here could demonstrate innovation and results that could be scaled up or down to different locations across the globe;

WHEREAS, I launched a Zero Plastics Initiative in May 2018 to partner with our marinas to prevent plastics pollution, increase public awareness of the issues, and begin efforts to remove plastics from Narragansett Bay and our coastlines, and I signed the Clean Seas Pledge in a commitment to reduce my use of plastics;

WHEREAS, the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) serves as the chief steward of Rhode Island's natural resources and has the mission of protecting, restoring, and promoting our environment, and the Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation is committed to providing safe, environmentally compliant, clean and affordable recycling services for Rhode Islanders;

WHEREAS, plastic bags and other single-use disposable items are used by many Rhode Island residents and businesses, and we must consider the impact of any new policies on all Rhode Islanders, including our low-income communities and small businesses; and

WHEREAS, it is critical to collaboratively develop the best approach to addressing the use, reuse, and clean-up of single-use disposable plastics in Rhode Island;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Gina M. Raimondo, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, do hereby order and direct the following:

1. There is hereby established the Task Force to Tackle Plastics ("Task Force") that shall advise the Governor.
2. The members and chair(s) of the Task Force shall be appointed by the Governor and shall serve at the pleasure of the Governor. The membership shall include, but not be limited to, representatives from:
  - i. Environmental groups;
  - ii. Marinas;
  - iii. Relevant industries (e.g., retail, food service);
  - iv. Municipalities;
  - v. Elected officials; and
  - vi. State agencies

3. The Task Force shall be organized and begin its work no later than September 17, 2018.
4. The Task Force shall provide recommendations to the Governor addressing the use, reuse, and clean-up of plastics in Rhode Island on or about February 18, 2019.
5. These recommendations shall include, but not be limited to:
  - i. Encouraging the financial and market factors necessary to support reduction in and recycling of plastics;
  - ii. Developing non-regulatory recognition and incentive programs, as well as potential legislation and/or regulations, and other measures to eliminate the sources of plastic pollution;
  - iii. Supporting and building upon the Zero Plastics Initiative and our existing, successful recycling programs; and
  - iv. Educating Rhode Islanders on the importance of and means to reducing and recycling plastics.

This Executive Order shall take effect immediately. Once the Task Force submits its recommendations to the Governor, it shall terminate its work.

So Ordered:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gina M. Raimondo", written over a horizontal line.

Gina M. Raimondo  
Governor

Dated: July 16, 2018