

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 environmental, social and health aspects ranging from resource consumption to littering of land and oceans. Plastic products can often 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, to the advantage of bioplastics. Studies and investigations 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.

Avfall Sverige also believes that:

- All plastic products should be designed for reuse and/or recycling by 2030 (not only packaging),
- 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,
- Producers are held responsible for designing products enabling reuse and/or recycling,
- The use of plastics in single-use disposable products are limited to applications where necessary, e.g. in various healthcare applications,
- The use of plastics in disposable products are limited through bans, taxes and fees,
- 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 (actual recycling) by 2030 and 85 % by 2040,
- The share of bioplastics, from sustainable resources, should gradually increase and make up at least 20 % of all plastic materials by 2030, and at least 50 % by 2040,
- Oxo-biodegradable plastics should be avoided, except in appropriate plastic products used in healthcare,
- 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,
- Plastics containing environmentally harmful and hazardous substances, that are neither suited for reuse nor recycling, should be thermally treated through energy recovery,
- Carbon dioxide emissions, stemming from plastics, emitted via energy recovery or material recovery processes, should be ascribed plastic as a material – hence to the production phase, and
- 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.



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