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REDUCING

PLASTIC CONSUMPTION

The public conversation around plastic often focuses on detrimental plastic waste in the ocean. While plastic entering the environment as waste is a serious problem, it's only a piece of a much larger issue.

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The plastic industry is the second largest and fastest-growing source of industrial greenhouse gas emissions. Almost all plastic, the CIEL researchers found, — including resins, fibers and additives — is derived from fossil fuels, including oil, coal, and gas.

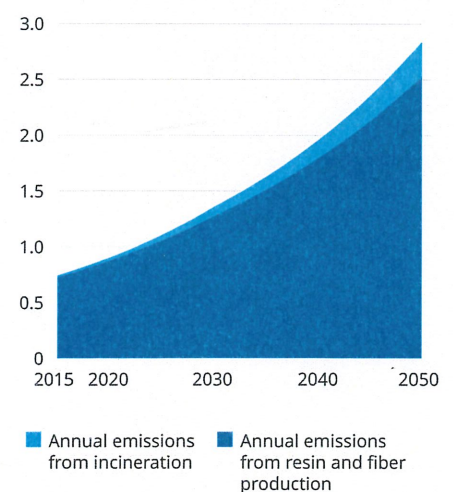
Worldwide, roughly 300 million metric tons of plastic is produced each year. Plastic production is projected to double in the next 20 years and nearly quadruple by 2050--and 50% of that is due to the production of single-use disposable plastics.

Nothing we use for a few minutes should be allowed to pollute our soil and water and persist indefinitely in our landfills or environment. Plastics never truly go away, yet they are being produced at an astronomical rate and accumulating in our environment. Only 9% of plastics have ever been recycled, and many plastics--including most single-use plastics like plastic cups, bags, utensils, take-out containers, and straws -- are not recyclable at all.

We cannot rely on recycling to take care of this problem and its climate impacts; we must reduce plastic production and consumption.

Annual plastic emissions 2015–2050

Measured in billion metric tons



Source: Plastic & Climate: The Hidden Costs of a Plastic Planet, May 2019; Center for International Environmental Law.