



LESSON 2.3

PLASTIC POLLUTION POLICIES

GRADE LEVEL	TIME
	
9-12	60-90 MINUTES

Objective:

Communities across the world have implemented various policies to reduce the presence of plastic pollution. Policies that aim to change personal and business use of disposable plastic items, in the forms of bans or fees, have grown in number. In this activity, students will read about the current status of these policies in the United States and their local communities.

Instructions:

1. Read the National Geographic Article: [See the complicated landscape of plastic bans in the U.S.](#)
2. Complete Part 1 of the student response sheet (questions 1-3). Discuss the students responses as a class.
3. Have students research plastic pollution policies that have been debated in their local community or state, using the [PBS.org Research Guide](#) as needed.
4. Have students complete Part 2 of the student response sheet (questions 4-6). Discuss the students responses as a class.

Optional activities:

Count how many students in the class selected a ban or a fee.



Materials:

- [National Geographic Article: See the complicated landscape of plastic bans in the U.S.](#)
- [Map of U.S. Plastic Reduction Policies](#)
- Student Response Sheet



Notes:

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Learning Standards:

- SCI:
MS-ESS3-3, HS-LS2-7,
- SS:
8.8.c, 10.9.a, 10.9.b,
S5-K1 #3, S5-K1 #4
- GLLP: 6, 7, 8

OFFICIAL NOTICE

**Plastic Bag Ban
Paper Bag Fee**

Beginning March 1st

New York State will prohibit the distribution of single-use plastic bags, with limited exceptions.

In New York City, all businesses covered by the ban must charge a five-cent (\$0.05) fee on paper bags.

This fee **will not apply** to any customers using SNAP or WIC.

Plastic Pollution and You

STUDENT RESPONSE SHEET PART 1

Name: _____

Class: _____

Date: ____/____/____

PART 1

1. Do you think there should be a policy/rule (such as a ban or a fee) about using plastic bags?
Why or why not?

2. What are some advantages of having a state-wide policy/rule instead of a local law?
What are some disadvantages?

3. Some states do not want to allow local or county governments to make rules about how people use disposable plastic items. What do you think about this?

Plastic Pollution and You

STUDENT RESPONSE SHEET PART 2

Name: _____

Class: _____

Date: ____/____/____

PART 2

4. What have you observed about how plastic bags are used and disposed of in your area?
How do you use plastic bags?

5. Has your community had a debate about plastic pollution policy? If so, which policies have been proposed? If not, share an example from another community you researched.

6. Which type of public policy do you think would work best in your community?
