



PLASTIC FREE JULY TOOLKIT

This year, Greenpeace activists around the world and partners within the Break Free From Plastic movement will use Plastic Free July to go beyond just personal changes and instead pressure four of the worst plastic polluters in the world to ditch plastic packaging for reuse, refill and package-free solutions.

WHY A CORPORATE FOCUS?

While personal lifestyle changes to reduce plastic can be a great way to reduce your waste and support zero waste businesses or initiatives, we will never have truly plastic-free, zero-waste communities unless corporations stop churning out billions of pounds of single-use plastic every year and governments finally turn off the plastic tap and hold them accountable. Big Brands, and major retailers, make it nearly impossible for people to avoid plastic packaging, as nearly every food item and personal care product commercially accessible is sold wrapped in plastic. We need corporations to innovate and find alternative, package-free ways of getting products to consumers.

Since 2017, The Coca-Cola Company, PepsiCo, Nestlé and Unilever have ranked among the top plastic polluting companies worldwide [based on global cleanups and audits](#). In 2021, Coca-Cola and PepsiCo topped the list in first and second position, with Unilever and Nestlé in 3rd and 4th. These companies know they have a pollution, PR, and packaging problem, but year after year it isn't getting better. In fact, Coca-Cola even produced MORE plastic bottles in 2021 than it did the year before - 25 billion bottles ([p. 72](#))!

But could they be getting the message that enough is enough? Coca-Cola and PepsiCo have kicked off 2022 by suggesting that they may have begun to understand that systems of refill and reuse are key in reducing their plastic footprint, but are these commitments and encouraging words translating into action that matches the scale of the problem? Not even close. These steps, outlined below, are not as ambitious as we need them to be to curb the worst impacts of plastics on communities, wildlife, and our climate.

Coca-Cola's announcement to make 25% of their packaging refillable/reusable by 2030 needs to be closer to 50% – and we need to ensure that this switch actually results in a reduction of their single-use plastics.

PepsiCo's announcement to “set a time-bound goal by the end of 2022 for a percent of volume of beverages to be delivered via strategies that avoid or minimize single-use packaging, including reusable and refillable bottles or containers” gives us an opportunity to ensure that their goal is as ambitious as we need it to be.

And what about Nestlé and Unilever? These two companies have not yet made any public commitments on refill and reuse systems but have launched some pilot projects trialing reusable packaging.

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Goal

Let's show these corporations that people across the globe are demanding that they move away from single-use plastics and finally, truly embrace reuse – and quickly! Coca-Cola once said that “people want plastic bottles,” when in reality, 71% of people around the world think single-use plastic products should be banned (according to a [2019 Ipsos survey](#)). We need to make it impossible for Coca-Cola and other plastic producers to continue telling themselves that false narrative. This PFJ, join us in honing in on the top two plastic polluters, Coca-Cola and PepsiCo, to demand ambitious and impactful plastic reduction and refill & reuse commitments by end of this year.

Three ways to engage in Plastic Free July 2022

1. Deliver/send a letter to retailers that sell Coca-Cola and PepsiCo products.
2. Call Coca-Cola and PepsiCo's headquarters.
3. Do a community clean-up-brand audit, then post photos tagging the big polluters on social media.

LETTER DELIVERY TO GROCERY STORES

Coca-Cola and PepsiCo would not be able to sell their products without retailers and grocery stores keeping them stocked on store shelves. Retailers and big brands must work together to swap single-use plastic for reusable alternatives, and retailers also need to get the memo that by not being part of the reuse solution, they are fueling the plastic waste and pollution problem. As major buyers and sellers of Coca-Cola and PepsiCo's products, retailers hold a lot of influence in a growing number of voices calling for change.

Bring a letter into your local grocery store (that sells Coca-Cola and PepsiCo products) and deliver it to the manager. If enough people take letters into their local stores, the message can travel into the hands of the people who deal with Coca-Cola and PepsiCo directly.

Here's how to deliver a letter.

1. Download a sample letter [here](#). Print a copy to deliver OR copy and paste it into an email.
2. Date and sign your printed copy. During your next grocery shop, visit the customer service desk and ask if the manager is around. If you meet the manager, you can use the same talking points listed for the Coca-Cola & PepsiCo phone calls to help inform your conversation. If the manager is not available, ask that the customer service representative kindly give it to them. Not into a face-to-face conversation in the store? No problem - you can print and mail your letter if it makes you more comfortable!
3. Want to share your experience? Post about it on social media and tag @CocaColaCo and @PepsiCo with a picture of you with your letter! Tag your grocery store too if you know their handle!

CALL COCA-COLA AND PEPSICO'S HEADQUARTERS

We are encouraging supporters to call Coca-Cola's headquarters throughout July. We want to make sure the corporate headquarters hear us loud and clear: we want reusable options, not more single-use plastic!

Coca-Cola Phone number:

1 (800) 438-2653

It will take you through some menu options and you'll have to press 1 for English (or whichever language you prefer), then press 5 for "all other inquiries."

Script:

"Hi, I'm calling about Coca-Cola's enormous plastic waste issue - can I share a few thoughts? I'm glad to see that Coca-Cola has publicly committed to selling some of its products in refillable/reusable containers, but I don't think it's ambitious enough. Coca-Cola produced **13 billion** more plastic bottles last year than the previous year and I'm concerned that your reuse & refill commitment won't actually decrease your plastic usage. Can you share information on how the company will move away from plastic packaging and replace it with reuse systems in my community?"

The customer service representative will likely refer to Coca-Cola's "World Without Waste" initiative and how Coca-Cola's bottles are nearly all recyclable.

A few facts you can respond with, if you like:

- Plastic recycling rates in Canada last year were less than 9% ([source](#)). Even if Coca-Cola's bottles are technically recyclable, there is a high likelihood that they're not being recycled.

- Even if most bottles were recycled, at the scale of production, the waste and pollution cost is still too high.
- Coca-Cola has been named the top polluter in global brand audits four years in a row
 - Coca-Cola's plastic is polluting our oceans, communities, and climate.
- Coca-Cola's commitment to scale refill and reuse is a step in the right direction, but we need to guarantee that this will equal a reduction in single-use plastic bottles. Coca-Cola needs to go above and beyond their commitment of 25% refillable bottles by 2030 because, frankly, that's not enough, nor is it quick enough.
- If you are in Canada, you can also say something along the lines of "I've heard that you have refillable solutions in other countries, we need to see this in Canada as well."

PepsiCo Phone number:

1 (800) 433-2652

You'll have to wait for the menu options and then endure the PepsiCo-themed hold music while they connect you to a consumer relations representative.

Back-up number / number that they might connect you to (PepsiCo Recycling hotline):
1-888-875-6555

Script

I'm calling to ask PepsiCo to go beyond recycling and invest in systems of refill and reuse instead. Current rates of plastics recycling in Canada are less than 9%, so PepsiCo solely focusing on recyclable plastic bottles is **not** helping mitigate the plastic waste crisis. PepsiCo has been one of the top polluters in global brand audits four years in a row. Coca-Cola recently committed to a reuse and refill goal earlier this year, and I'd like to see PepsiCo go beyond Coca-Cola's commitment. Can I be assured that PepsiCo will offer reuse systems in my community?"

A few lines you can respond with, if you like:

- We are asking PepsiCo to commit to having 50% refillable packaging by 2030.
- Plastic recycling rates in Canada last year were less than 9%. Even if PepsiCo's bottles are technically recyclable, there is a high likelihood that they're not being recycled.
- Even if most bottles were recycled, at the scale of production, the waste and pollution cost is still too high.

COMMUNITY CLEAN UP & BRAND AUDIT

- Read here: <https://www.greenpeace.org/usa/toolkits/community-plastic-clean-up/>