**Ahead of Paris 2024 Olympics, Over 100 Elite Athletes Ask Coca-Cola and Pepsi to Ramp Up Reusable Packaging in Face of Plastic Pollution Crisis**

**July 10, 2024:** Today, over 100 sports organizations and elite athletes from around the world, including Olympians and world champions, called on leading beverage companies Coca-Cola and Pepsi, and bottler Coca-Cola Europacific Partners (CCEP) to curb plastic pollution by significantly increasing reusable packaging.

The Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games will be the largest sporting event ever to serve beverages in reusable packaging, potentially replacing millions of single-use plastic cups. In a letter led by organizations [Sailors for the Sea Powered by Oceana](https://sailorsforthesea.org) and [EcoAthletes](https://www.ecoathletes.org), signatories expressed their concern for the growing plastic pollution crisis, and urged the soft drink companies to use Paris 2024 as a launchpad for introducing more reuse at future Olympic Games and other sporting events. The 113 signatories to the letter include 102 athletes and eleven organizations, representing 43 sports and 30 countries. Over 50 Olympians, Paralympians, world champions, and world record holders signed the letter, including 22 athletes who will be competing at the Paris 2024 Games. Notably, the list of signatories includes 39-time freediving world record holder from Italy **Alessia Zecchini**, two-time Olympic gold medalist swimmer for Team USA **Zach Apple**, and the 50-year-old skateboarder bound for Paris 2024 representing Team Great Britain **Andy Macdonald**.

“Escalating plastic pollution poses a massive threat to the oceans and our health,” said **Dr. Shelley Brown**, Director of Sailors for the Sea. “Plastics are everywhere, from floating on the surface of the ocean, to sitting at the deepest point of the ocean floor, to the air we breathe and the water we drink. We must reduce the amount of single-use plastic being produced. The answer is simple – we need more reuse and less single use.”

“In sports, the scoreboard doesn’t lie,” asserted EcoAthletes CEO and founder **Lew Blaustein**. “When it comes to plastic pollution and its many public health and climate impacts, humanity is behind and in dire need of a comeback. Recycling won’t get us there, not even close. The only way we can get to where we need to go on plastic pollution is a systemic commitment to exponentially grow reuse and a dramatic draw down of single use.”

Olympic sailor in mixed 470 sailing for Team USA, **Lara Dallman-Weiss**, added “I’ve competed in events around the world – and everywhere I sail, I find single-use plastics polluting our waters and shorelines. One thing is clear, more needs to be done to stop the plastics crisis.”

The organizations and athletes stressed that recycling alone will not solve the plastic pollution crisis – only 9% of all plastic waste ever generated has been recycled. In order to tackle the plastic pollution crisis, we need to prioritize the reduction of plastic production and transition to reuse systems. The letter refers to research by Oceana, which found that just a 10-percentage point increase in reusable beverage packaging globally by 2030 can eliminate the need for over 1 trillion single-use plastic bottles and cups. This shift can prevent up to 153 billion of these containers from getting into the world’s waterways and oceans. For the past six years, The Coca-Cola Company and PepsiCo have been found to be amongst the [top global plastic polluters](https://www.breakfreefromplastic.org/2024/02/07/bffp-movement-unveils-2023-global-brand-audit-results/), according to annual brand audit data collected by the #BreakFreeFromPlastic movement.

Specifically, the letter asks Coca-Cola and Pepsi to keep the torch lit for reuse following the Olympics by committing to:

* Make reuse an option for all their customers globally and dramatically increase reusable packaging by 2030.
* Ensure future Olympics and other major sporting events rely on reusable packaging rather than single-use.
* Advocate for the inclusion of legally binding targets and other mechanisms to increase reusable packaging in national legislation and in the United Nations plastic treaty.

The letter was supported also in collaboration with #[BreakFreeFromPlastic](https://www.breakfreefromplastic.org), [Oceana](https://oceana.org), [Adansonia.green](https://adansonia.green), [Defend Our Health](https://defendourhealth.org), [Front Commun pour la Protection de l’Environnement et des Espaces Protégées](https://fcpeep-rdc.org), [Greeners Action](https://www.greeners-action.org), [Habits of Waste](https://habitsofwaste.org/campaigns/lights-camera-plastic-sports-edition/) and [Retorna](http://retorna.org).

The letter, together with its full list of signatories can be viewed at [www.sailorsforthesea.org/beareusechampion](http://www.sailorsforthesea.org/beareusechampion)

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