

Positives of Plastic

Beyond the Bottle: Recycled Plastic Bottles Find New Life as Consumer Products

Plastic bottles are useful, convenient, and sustainable containers for many perishable products, but their value extends far beyond single-use. A recent study from the Journal of Environmental Science and Technology found that plastic is more environmentally friendly across its lifecycle and that replacing plastics with alternatives results in higher greenhouse gas emissions in most cases.

Tables



Mexican company Luken, which exports its products to the U.S., is one of the many furniture companies relying on recycled plastic, fashioning side tables and children's tables and chairs from 600 recycled plastic bottles per piece.

Couches



Furniture retailer Lovesac uses about 113 recycled plastic bottles in each of its sleek, modern, plastic-based sectionals, helping build a circular economy by removing 25 million plastic bottles from the waste stream in 2020 alone.

Rugs



Pottery Barn crafts indoor/outdoor rugs from up to 1,000 recycled plastic bottles per rug as part of a recycled plastics product line aimed at reducing waste and increasing material circularity.

Workspaces



Office space innovator ROOM creates portable, soundproof private meeting spaces that incorporate over 1,000 plastic bottles per room. A lifecycle analysis found these rooms can reduce organizations' cumulative carbon emissions by 33 percent over 10 years, demonstrating recycled plastics' sustainability benefits beyond reducing waste.

Footwear



Companies like Adidas transform plastic bottles recovered from the ocean into sneakers, using about **11 bottles per pair**.

Bedding



Buffy produces its "Cloud Comforter" using about **50 recycled plastic bottles**, totaling 4 million bottles diverted from landfills in 2020 alone.

Activewear

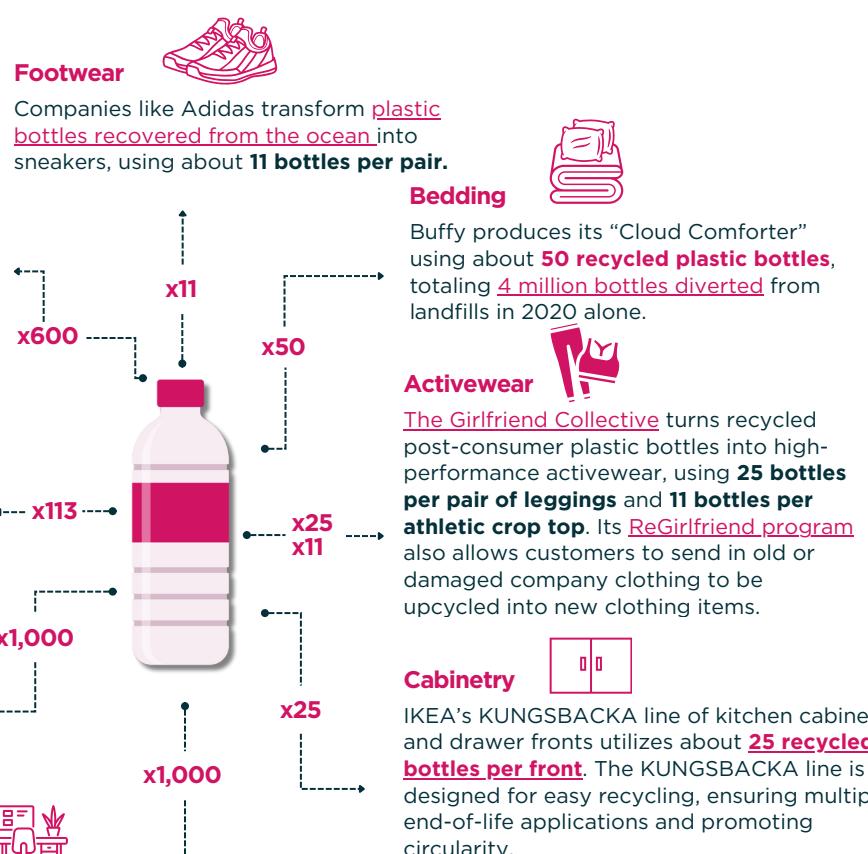


The Girlfriend Collective turns recycled post-consumer plastic bottles into high-performance activewear, using **25 bottles per pair of leggings** and **11 bottles per athletic crop top**. Its ReGirlfriend program also allows customers to send in old or damaged company clothing to be upcycled into new clothing items.

Cabinetry



IKEA's KUNGBACKA line of kitchen cabinet and drawer fronts utilizes about **25 recycled bottles per front**. The KUNGBACKA line is designed for easy recycling, ensuring multiple end-of-life applications and promoting circularity.



Plastics are key to creating a more circular future

The recovery and remanufacture of plastic products unlock the material's full potential and value. From roads to jet fuel to skyscrapers and more, the years to come are ripe with opportunities to create more innovative, sustainable end markets for post-consumer plastics. Alongside sustained support for mechanical recycling infrastructure, policymakers must support new technologies like advanced or molecular recycling, capable of creating nearly 40,000 domestic jobs to maximize recovery and minimize waste.

More than one million Americans work in jobs directly or indirectly connected to the plastics industry, spanning a wide range of sectors. From the engineers who design the machinery that manufactures essential plastic products, to the material suppliers distributing raw plastics, to the processors shaping materials into goods, and the recyclers giving used plastic a second life, the plastics supply chain is a vital aspect within both the U.S. and global economy.