



Marcus Gover

CEO, WRAP

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Dear Marcus Gover,

As representatives of seven environmental NGOs, we are writing to express our concern about how some members of WRAP's Plastic Pact are marketing their products.

A government [report revealed that an estimated 700,000 plastic bottles are littered every single day in the UK](#). It is no surprise that over the last 18 months, public concern about plastic pollution has grown considerably and consumers have become more conscious of the impact of their purchasing decisions – particularly in relation to single-use plastic.

One of The UK Plastic Pact's four 'world-leading targets' requires members 'to take actions to eliminate problematic or unnecessary single-use packaging items through redesign, innovation or alternative (reuse) delivery models' by 2025.

We were therefore deeply disappointed & concerned to see Coca-Cola, one of your most prominent Plastic Pact members, seeking to disrupt consumer understanding of what is meant by 'single use' packaging in its recent advertising campaign. It has since defended its use of single-use plastic packaging and shows no commitment to eliminate it anytime soon.

We believe Coca-Cola's recent 'Round in Circles' advertising campaign sets a dangerous precedent to the industry and poses a real and immediate threat to progress being made on reducing single-use plastic. [The campaign features a central message that, \(and we quote Coca-Cola\)](#) "plastic bottles are only single-use if we throw them away rather than recycle".

The following definitions are used as the foundations of European Law and within industry's important work and frameworks to tackle problematic, single-use plastic.

- WRAP's own [Plastics Pact](#) members define problematic plastic as: "Single-use plastic items where consumption could be avoided through elimination, reuse or replacement and items that, post-consumption, commonly do not enter recycling and composting systems, or where they do, are not recycled due to their format, composition or size."
- The [European Union's Single-Use Directive](#) defines single-use plastic as: "a product that is made wholly or partly from plastic and that is not conceived, designed or placed on the market to accomplish, within its life span, multiple trips or rotations by



being returned to a producer for refill or re-used for the same purpose for which it was conceived.” For the avoidance of any doubt, the Directive states that: “Examples of beverage containers to be considered as single-use plastic products are beverage bottles or composite beverage packaging used for beer, wine, water, liquid refreshments, juices and nectars, instant beverages or milk.” Comparable definitions are adopted and understood by the British Government and the United Nations.

- The [Collins Dictionary, which announced ‘single-use’ as their ‘word of the year’ in 2018](#) (demonstrating the level at which it has reached the public vernacular) defines it as: “products that are often made of plastic and have been made to use just once, only to be thrown away after, rendering them unsustainable and harmful to the planet.”

For any serious attempt to tackle the problems associated with single-use plastic to be successful, these widely held definitions need to be agreed to and respected.

Plastic bottles are now in the top 10 most commonly found items on UK beaches and [bottles, caps and lids are the most commonly found item on European beaches](#) and in [European Rivers](#). Coca-Cola produces [200,000 bottles a minute – more than a fifth of the world’s PET bottle output. They have been consistently named as the worst plastic polluter in the world and themselves recognise that almost half of the bottles they produce are not recycled.](#)

We are sure none of this is new to you, and we hope you share our deeply held concern that Coca-Cola’s redefining of what is single-use sets a precedent to the rest of the drinks industry at a time when we desperately need to maintain progress on single-use plastic reduction.

We believe Coca-Cola are undermining WRAP’s important work on [eliminating problematic plastics](#) - work that relies on commonly held definitions of ‘single-use’. As a marketing ploy it also clearly falls well below WRAP’s values of integrity and honesty that we know you rightly take very seriously.

With all this in mind, we are asking for you to;

- Respond clarifying the UK Plastic Pact’s position and how it will both help protect the accepted definition of the term ‘single-use’ as well as holding its members to account on its goal to eliminate single-use packaging in five years.
- Set clear guidelines for your members about what constitutes single-use given that a shared understanding of this underpins the Plastic Pact.
- Help us protect this important definition as we look to move forward together in tackling plastic pollution.

We stand alongside you and support your bold aim of ensuring “unnecessary single-use plastic packaging will be a thing of the past”.



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We hope you will stand with us today in protecting what we all understand to be 'single-use plastic' and take this opportunity to call out Coca-Cola and ask them to reconsider their existing marketing strategy that has the potential to do so much harm.

Your sincerely,

Rebecca Burgess, CEO City to Sea

Antoinette Vermilye, Co-Founder, Gallifrey Foundation

Lena Steger, GLOBAL 2000

Louise Edge, Head of Ocean Plastics Campaign, Greenpeace UK

Julian Kirby, Lead Plastic Pollution Campaigner. Friends of the Earth

Daniel Webb, Founder of Everyday Plastic

Amanda Keetley, Founder, Less Plastic