

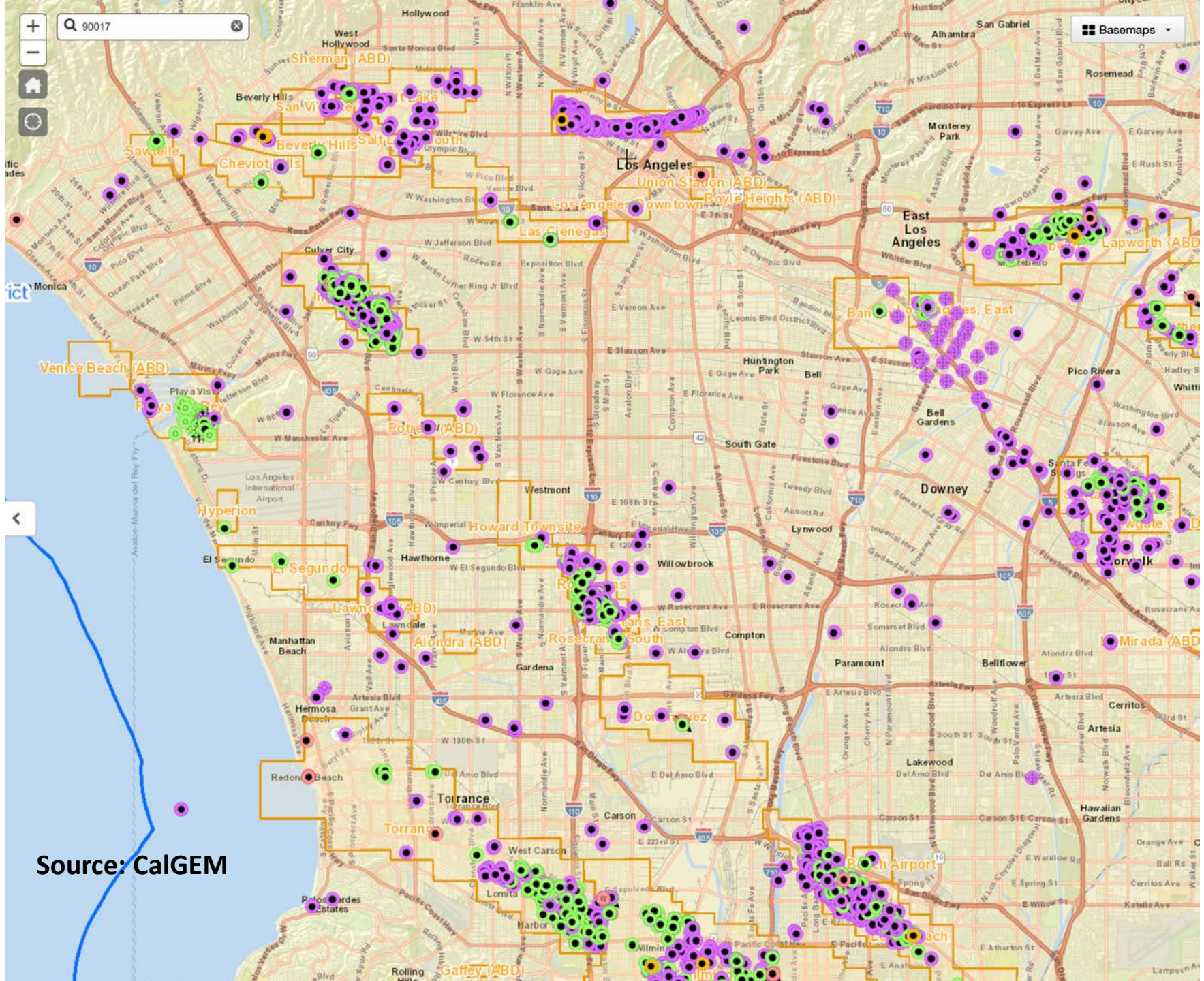
Plastic in California:

Impacts on Communities and the Environment

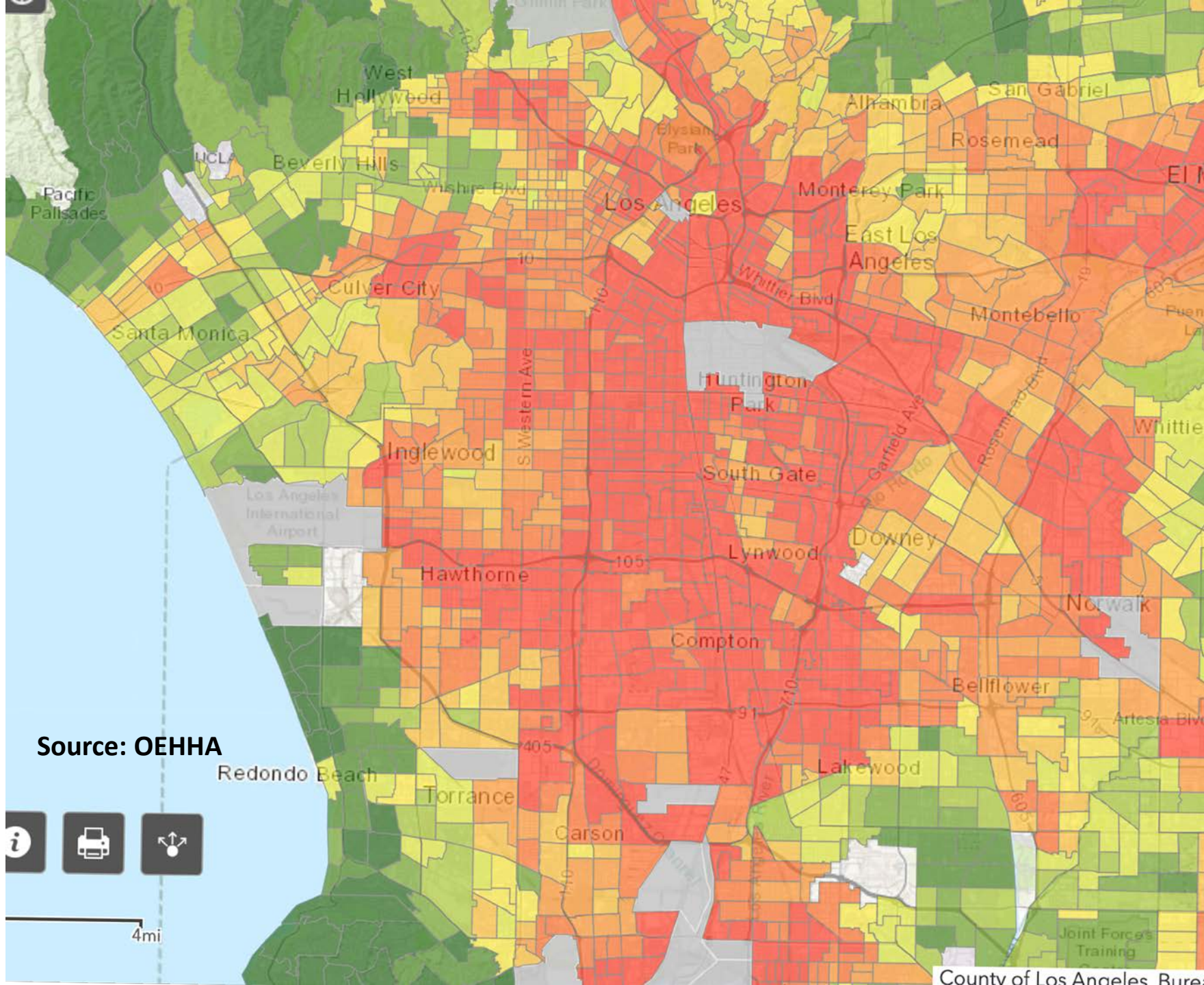


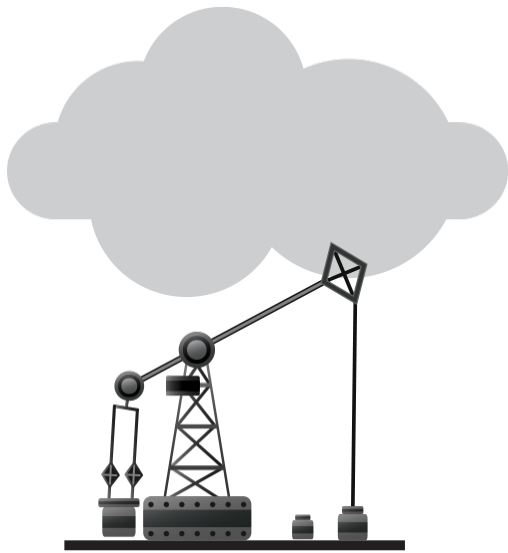
Plastic is an environmental injustice





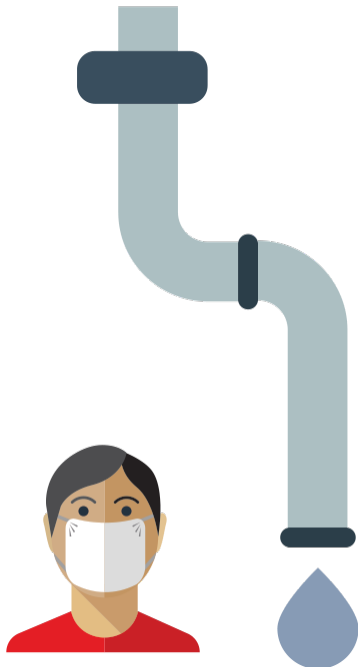
Source: CalGEM





EXTRACTION

Raw Materials



Drilling for oil and gas usually happens in environmental justice (EJ) communities. Low-income families and people of color are often exposed to toxic emissions and spills.

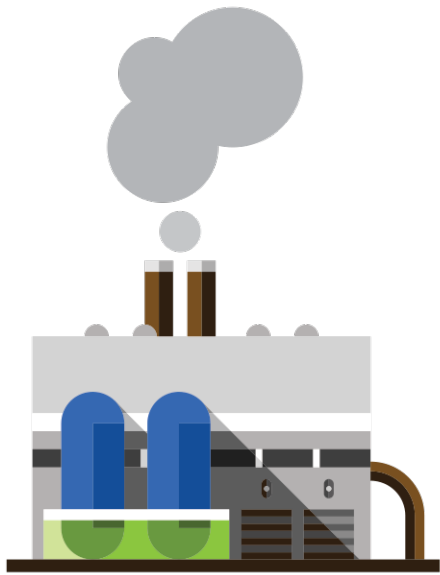


Transportation of raw materials



EJ communities often live near offshore drilling, as well as close to ports, refineries and other industrialized areas.

There is also evidence that living near transportation hubs and corridors exposes people to higher levels of airborne pollutants.



PRODUCTION

Manufacturing



Crude oil and gas are refined in factories and refineries in EJ communities. These facilities are often next to rivers and/or groundwater, which can get polluted and carry that pollution to the ocean.

Transportation of single-use plastics

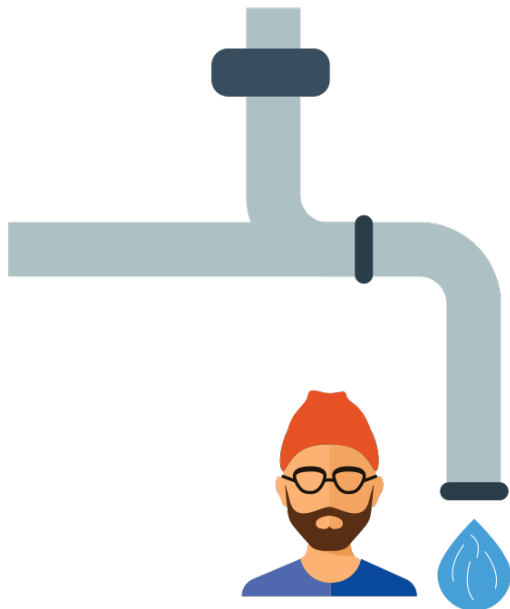
Residents are exposed not only to toxic chemicals from production, but also to indirect source emissions from warehouses and heavy traffic from trucks.





USE

Market Penetration



Corporations spend marketing dollars to ensure maximum penetration in communities. They flood EJ communities with dollar stores where families feel they can get their money's worth, emphasizing their product's “value” and convenience. Many times it is also toxic as it may contain high levels of lead and other endocrine disruptors.



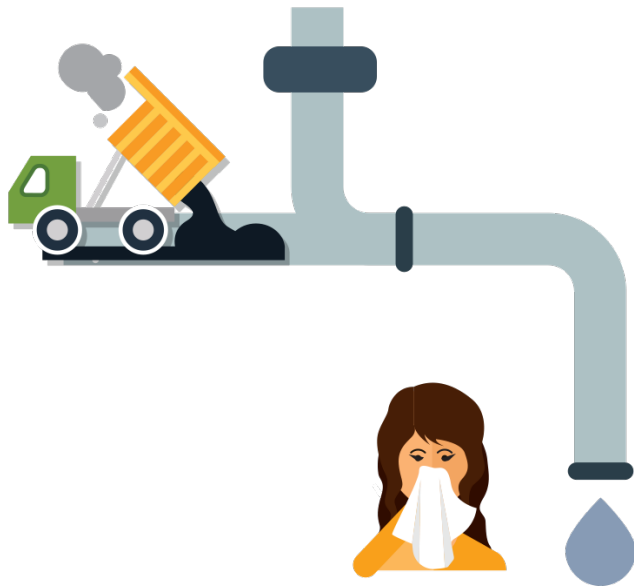
Most of that merchandise is very low quality and breaks while in use. Other plastic products are simply single-use. Most of it ends up being waste and must be hauled away creating even more emissions by releasing methane.





WASTE

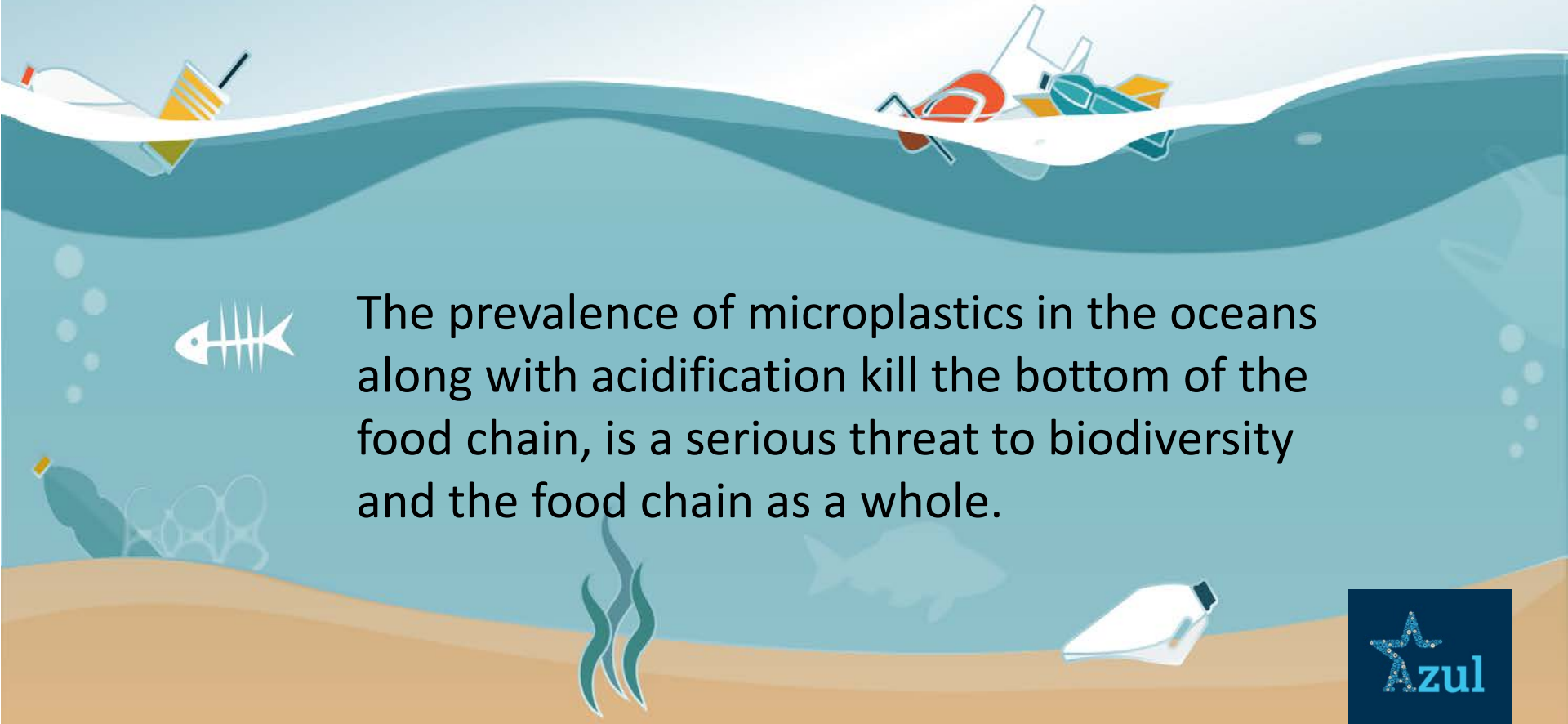
Disposal & Incineration



Waste, even if discarded “properly,” usually finds a way to the ocean. Landfills are in areas where low-income families and people of color live, exposing them to air, water and soil pollution.

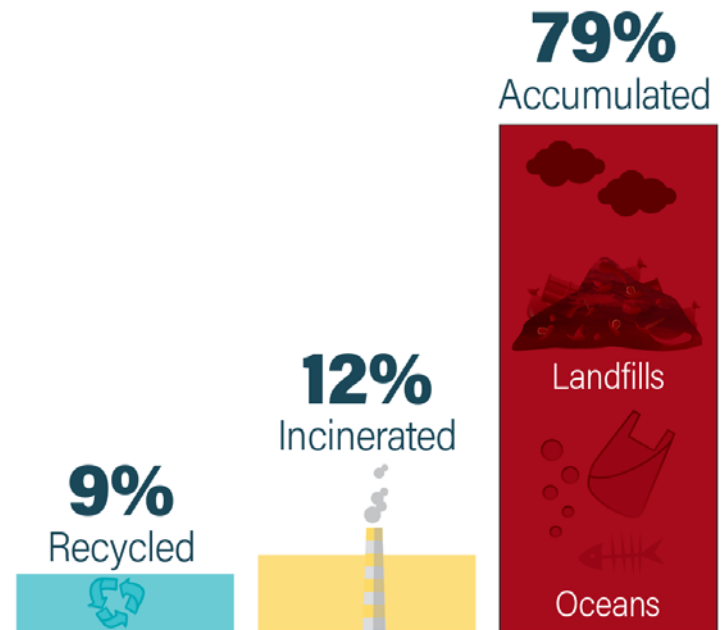
Sometimes the waste is incinerated, which contributes to climate change by emitting CO₂. Incinerators are also often located in EJ communities.

More pollution leaking into the ocean means more dead zones, increased ocean acidification, and less absorption of CO₂. The climate crisis is affecting EJ communities disproportionately, and plastic production is contributing to it.



The prevalence of microplastics in the oceans along with acidification kill the bottom of the food chain, is a serious threat to biodiversity and the food chain as a whole.

Recycling is not the solution. Most plastics can only be recycled once and since virgin materials are so cheap, manufacturers prefer not to use more expensive recycled content. Recycling also generates greenhouse gas emissions and recycling plants are in EJ communities.



Geyer, Jambeck, and Law, "Production, Use, and Fate of All Plastics Ever Made."

¡Gracias!

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