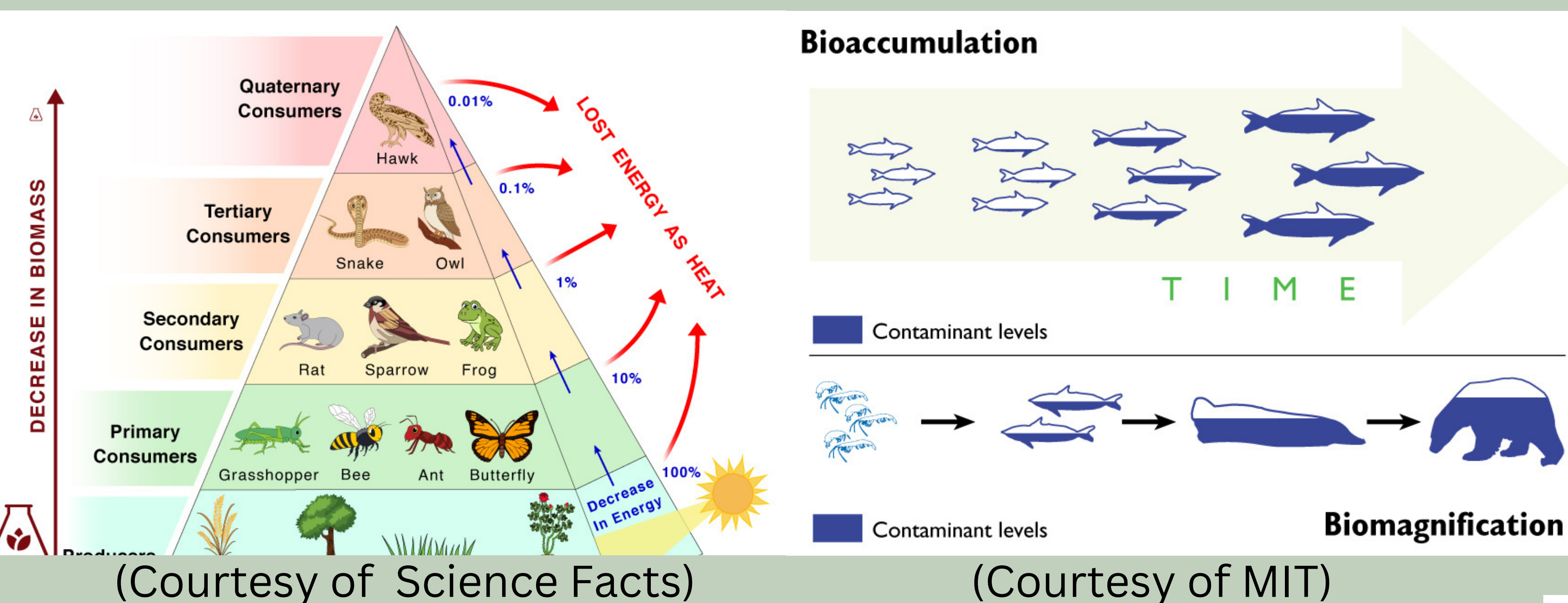


The Rise of Microplastics

Consequences of our Disposable Culture

Introduction

Microplastics are minuscule plastic particles that span land, the ocean, and even our bodies. Less than 5mm in size, microplastics arise from the decomposition of larger plastics and the development of products. As each organism transfers energy in the trophic pyramid, microplastics bioaccumulate and biomagnify.



Objective

Grasp a comprehensive understanding of the aquatic and terrestrial impacts microplastics place on animals and humans, as well as the challenges they pose. Delve into community initiatives that practice mindful consumption and shed awareness throughout Los Angeles.

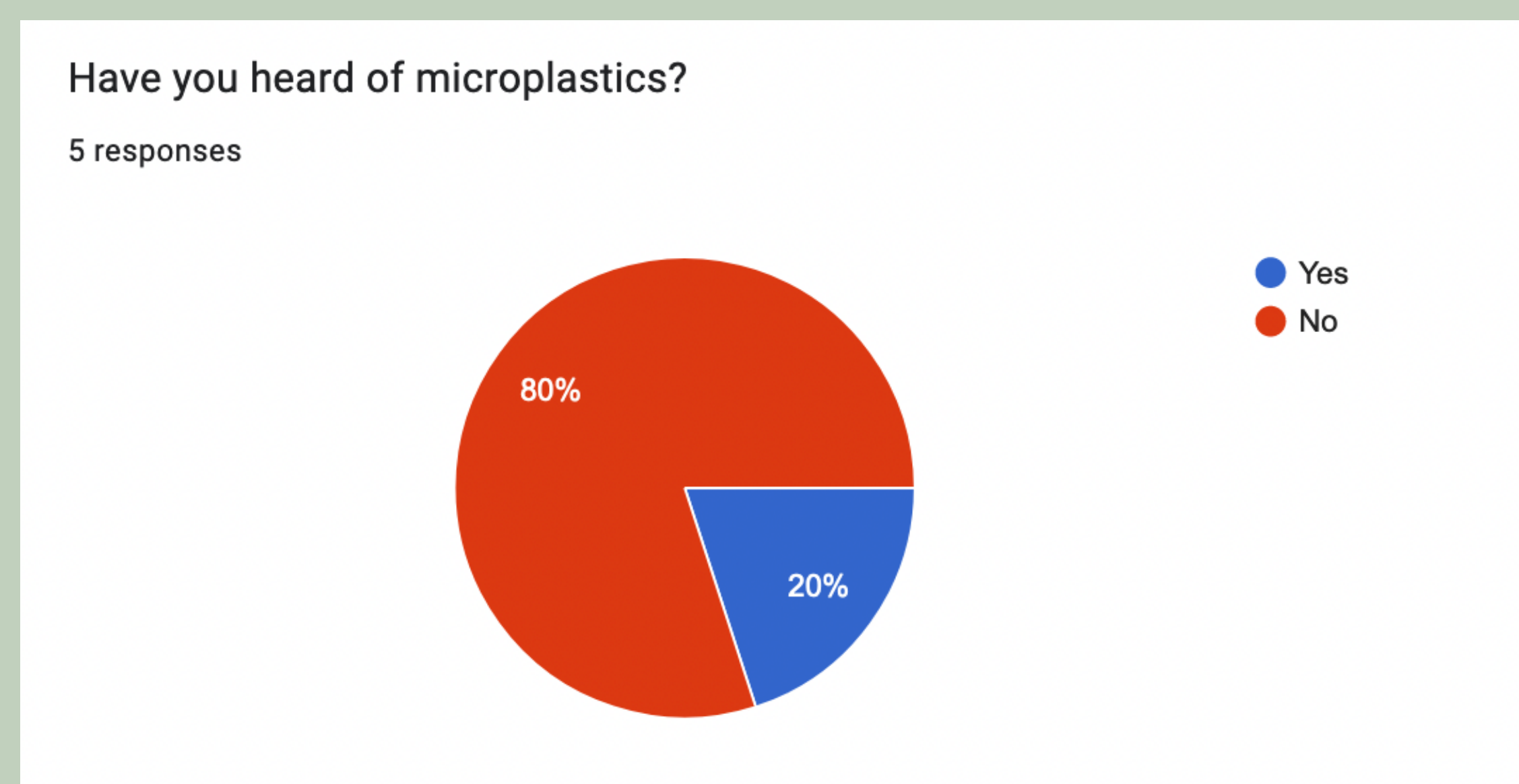
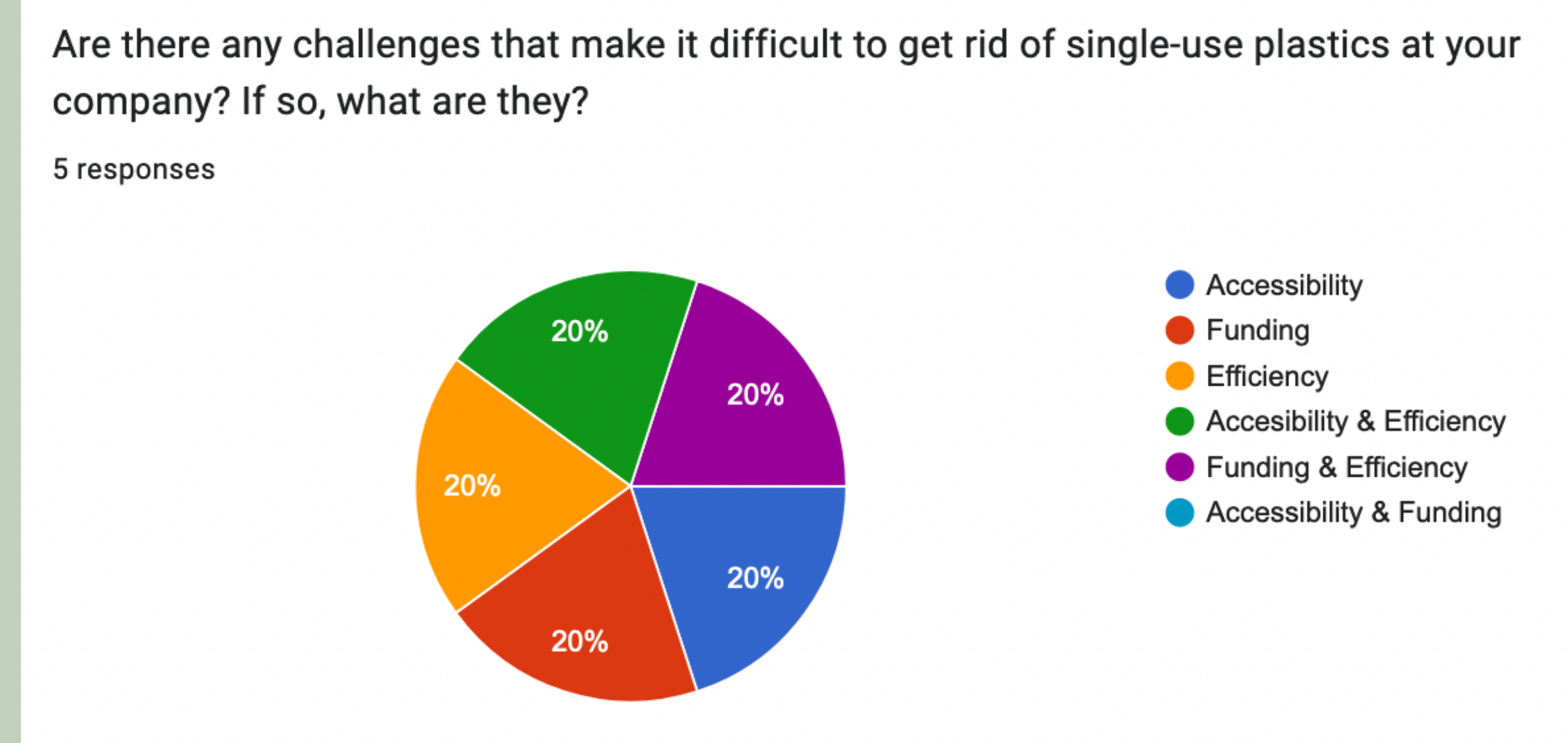
Alexis Martin

Methodology

- Collected microplastic particles at Dockweiler Beach (27)
- Surveyed 5 local restaurants
 - Simply Wholesome, Puerto Nuevo Coffee, All About Poke, The Ramen Joint, Thai Dishes

Results

- 80% of the companies have heard of microplastics, 20% have not
- 100% of companies want to be plastic-free in the foreseeable future
- 75% of companies are *possibly* willing to get rid of single-use plastics, 25% of companies are willing to get rid of single-use plastics



Conclusion

An emerging field of study, microplastics present numerous health challenges. It can cause respiratory irritation, disrupt reproductive systems, cause liver damage, & stunt growth (Yale Sustainability). Although our bodies can process natural polymers, they cannot process man-made polymers. For marine animals, microplastics are lethal.

Microplastics can enter our system by eating, touching, or breathing. Humans consume more than 100,000 microplastics a year. Often, microplastics infiltrate drinking water, sugar, honey, and salt. We ingest about a credit card's worth of plastic per week (CNN).

Wearing clothes made of polyester, nylon, or spandex, heightens the entry of microplastics into our systems.

Restaurants generate more than 11 million tons of plastic waste yearly (Environmental Protection Agency). It is critical restaurants reform their utilization of plastic to create a healthier, plastic-free society.

Let's do our part!

What can we do?

- Urge our local restaurants to adopt biodegradable packaging/straws
- Avoid single-use plastics
- Support initiatives of like-minded groups such as The Plastic Pollution Coalition & Plastic Free Restaurants