

# Oxo-Biodegradable Plastics Association

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“It’s not just the plastic, muddying the water”

## OPA comments on UN Conference

The statement from one of the UN scientists at their recent conference in Kenya that “Biodegradable plastic is a ‘false solution’ for ocean waste” is itself a false statement, and only adds to the confusion.

There is no denying that there is a problem with plastic waste getting into the world’s oceans, and it is a big problem for many countries on land and sea. This plastic waste is from conventional plastics, and that is why oxo-biodegradable plastic was invented, and why it is now mandatory in nine member states of the UN.

Plastic is irreplaceable for many applications because it is lightweight, strong, flexible and waterproof. In fact there is nothing like it when it comes to protecting food and other goods from damage and contamination. Of course we all need to encourage people to dispose responsibly of their plastic waste but it’s clear that something needs to be done right now, which is why the speech by the UN scientist is not helpful. It would have been better if she had consulted the oxo-biodegradable industry first, and listened to Michael Laurier, the CEO of Symphony Environmental Technologies Plc, who spoke on this subject at the UN on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2015

<http://www.biodeg.org/OPA%20MEMBER%20COMPANY%20SPEAKS%20AT%20THE%20UN%20-%206-3-15.pdf>

For the sake of the clarity, there are two types of biodegradable plastic. They are:

Vegetable based (often called bio or compostable plastic) tested according to EN13432 and ASTM D6400. It is this type of plastic which requires temperatures of 50°C plus, which are found in industrial composting units but not in the sea.

And

Oxo-biodegradable plastic - tested according to ASTM D6954 or BS8472. This is made from polymers such as PP and PE with extra ingredients which cause it to degrade and biodegrade in the open environment on land or sea, very much more quickly than old-fashioned plastic. It does not need high temperatures. It converts into materials which are no longer plastic and which can be consumed by bacteria on land or sea until there is nothing left of the plastic article, no toxic residues and no fragments of plastic. In fact ASTM D6954 and BS8472 require it to pass eco-toxicity tests. Biodegradation specifically in the marine environment has recently been proved by independent UK academics.

See also <http://www.biodeg.org/marineenvironment.html>

Oxo-biodegradable plastic is available all around the world right now. It can be made in existing plastic factories with existing machinery and workforce at little or no extra cost, and can be recycled or incinerated in the same way as conventional plastic if collected.

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