

HP sources more than 550,000 pounds of ocean-bound plastic for new cartridges

By Nate Hurst, Chief Sustainability and Social Impact Officer



Imagine the size of an adult humpback whale. Now imagine the whale relative to an empty plastic water bottle. No comparison, right? In fact, it would take about 12 million empty plastic bottles (that's nearly one bottle per every person in the state of Ohio) to balance the scale against just seven adult humpback whales.

Today there are about [65,000](#) humpback whales in the world. Meanwhile, humans are producing about 20 million plastic bottles [a second](#). The two facts shouldn't be related, except a large portion of these bottles end up on shorelines and in waterways, contributing to the estimated [17.6 billion pounds](#) (8 million tonnes) of plastic waste spilling into our oceans each year. In fact, research by the [Ellen MacArthur Foundation](#) estimates that by 2050, there will be more plastic, by weight, than fish in the ocean. And while humpback whales are mammals, not fish, protecting their ocean habitat is essential not only for all [life below water](#), it's vital for the sustainability of our planet and all people who live here.

The positive news is that ocean-bound plastic is a problem that can be solved. And I'm proud to say that HP is helping lead the way.

Building an ocean-bound plastics supply chain

This week, HP [announced](#) that 12 million plastic bottles collected in Haiti are being upcycled into new [Original HP ink cartridges](#)—that's more than 550,000 pounds (250 tonnes) of plastic material that won't be spilling into the Caribbean Sea.

This milestone accomplishment comes just two years after we announced that we were joining the [First Mile Coalition](#) to clean up plastic waste and create economic opportunity for the people of Haiti. Haiti is the poorest country in the western hemisphere. It continues to recover from a catastrophic 7.0 earthquake that hit the country in 2010, as well as smaller quakes (including a 5.9 quake earlier this month) and several severe weather events. With limited access to clean water, Haitians rely on bottled water. Because proper disposal methods aren't in place, plastic bottles litter the country's land, canals, and shoreline—eventually finding their way into the Caribbean Sea.

To help address this problem, HP partnered with Thread International and the First Mile Coalition on a program that turns plastic bottles collected in Haiti into recycled plastic that is used to produce Original HP ink cartridges. HP and our partners have built a fully functioning ocean-bound plastics supply chain with materials sourced from collectors in Haiti. Together with the First Mile Coalition, we've created more than 600 income opportunities for adults in the country.

HP has long been an industry leader in closed-loop recycling, combining material from products returned by our customers through the [HP Planet Partners program](#) with other post-consumer materials to create new Original HP cartridges. Through 2017 HP produced more than 3.8 billion Original HP ink and toner cartridges using recycled plastic from more than 784 million recovered cartridges, 86 million apparel hangers, and 4 billion plastic bottles. More than 80 percent of our ink cartridges now contain 45–70 percent recycled content, and 100 percent of HP toner cartridges (excluding toner bottles) now contain 5–38 percent recycled content.

Collaborating to end ocean-plastic pollution

We've made tremendous progress in Haiti and through our long-standing closed-loop recycling process. Yet we recognize that truly turning off the tap on plastics entering our oceans requires all of us working together toward this shared goal.

That's why this week, HP has joined the NextWave Coalition, a consortium of worldwide businesses committed to scaling the use of ocean-bound plastics by developing a global network of ocean-bound plastics supply chains. The addition of HP, along with new member Ikea, to the NextWave Coalition will be formally announced at the fifth annual [Our Ocean](#) Conference, Oct. 29–30 in Bali, Indonesia, where my colleague, Ellen Jackowski, will be speaking.

Through our work and partnerships in Haiti, we've proven an ocean-bound plastics supply chain is feasible—and we've learned many lessons along the way. Joining the NextWave consortium is one way we can help other companies benefit from our experience, and to learn from others in return. This enables all of us to scale more quickly.

Our Chief Supply Chain Officer Stuart Pann describes it this way: "While HP has already demonstrated our commitment to sustainable impact by eliminating ocean-bound plastics and reusing them in our products, we firmly believe in the power of collaboration. We have a responsibility to take the critical steps necessary to reduce plastic pollution. Collaboration within and between industries is one of those critical steps."

Solving ocean-bound plastic is fully within mankind's control. By working together to create innovative new supply chain models, like the recycling program in Haiti, and openly sharing learnings and experience with others, both inside and beyond our industry, we can close the ocean-bound plastics tap for good.

Watch our new film, [Oceans of Plastic](#), and visit [www.hp.com/sustainableimpact](#) to learn more about HP Planet Partners and our plastic bottle recycling program in Haiti. Follow our progress at [www.twitter.com/hpsustainable](#) as we work to #BeatPlasticPollution.