

Turning the tide: Policy interventions for single-use plastic waste in small islands

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The proliferation of waste from single-use plastics poses a significant threat to the environment and a considerable challenge to policy-makers world-wide. In small island communities, the problem is heightened by susceptible environments and high per capita burden of regulations. There have been an increasing number of regulatory interventions to counter this issue in the past few years. Legislative bans, especially on products like polystyrene foam, and market-driven measures, such as fees on disposable plastics, manifest a renewed commitment among authorities to reduce plastic consumption and disposal. This paper reviews the current state of the art on the regulation of single-use plastic in small islands. Adopting a narrative review method, it consolidates information from diverse sources such as governmental reports, academic research and NGO publications, presenting a broad perspective of plastic waste challenges and mitigation strategies. Malta and Aruba are selected as case studies, showcasing the diverse approaches islands may take. Findings indicate that a holistic strategy, blending legislative restrictions, market measures and communication, is vital in transforming behaviour on single-use plastic consumption. The study underscores these strategies' pivotal role in ensuring the environmental sustainability of island communities.

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