

About the Program

It is estimated that more than 22 million pounds of plastic pollution end up in the Great Lakes every year. Most of this plastic is packaging and single-use items commonly provided at restaurants and hotels. Great Lakes Friendly Hotels say no to single-use plastic and reduce the amount of plastic entering our waterways by stopping the flow at the source.

Here are some facts about single-use plastic items commonly offered at conventional hotels:

- Straws and stirrers are one of the most commonly found items polluting our beaches worldwide.
- EPS foam products easily break into small pieces that litter the beach, poison marine species when ingested, and release toxic chemicals into your food.
- The 100 billion single-use bags used per year in the U.S. are easily replaceable with reusable and paper bags.
- Only about 5% of U.S. plastic waste gets recycled

The Surfrider Foundation created the Great Lakes Friendly Hotels program to respond to the plastic pollution crisis in our lakes and along our coasts. The goals of the program are to help hotels reduce single-use plastic waste, eliminate the use of expanded polystyrene foam, and support sustainable practices that protect the marine environment through improved conservation efforts. The larger we grow our network of Great Lakes Friendly leaders, the more mainstream the concept of plastic-free becomes. Help protect the ocean and your local beach by supporting Great Lakes Friendly Hotels near you.



Learn more:
SURFRIDER.ORG/OFH

Contact us:
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How to Participate

MANDATORY CRITERIA: FOLLOW ALL 7

- No plastic beverage bottles or plastic bags are sold or used onsite.
- No expanded polystyrene is used anywhere onsite (aka Styrofoam).
- Cups, utensils, straws, condiments, and other accessory items in rooms are reusable or made from naturally occurring materials and are not packaged in plastic.¹
- Toiletries (shampoo, conditioner, shower gel, lotion, etc.) are not packaged in small plastic bottles.²
- Water refill stations are available for guests onsite.
- If applicable, restaurants or cafes onsite are Surfrider Great Lakes Friendly Restaurants.³
- Proper solid waste recycling procedures are followed and bins are amply provided for guest use.

OPTIONAL CRITERIA: CHOOSE AT LEAST 3

- Coffee and tea stations do not use single-use pods or plastic packaging in rooms.
- Concessions and pre-packaged food items are not sold or distributed in plastic packaging, including in room mini bars.
- Room keys are reusable or made from naturally occurring materials.
- Water conservation and pollution mitigation efforts are implemented. At minimum, rooms must have signage which asks guests to consider using their towels and linens more than once in the rooms.

1. Acceptable alternatives include naturally occurring materials (e.g. hay, bamboo, paper) and reusables (e.g. metal, glass), not including bio-based plastic.

2. Acceptable alternatives include reusable containers that can be mounted on the wall or placed on the counter, or bar soap wrapped in paper.

3. See surfrider.org/ofr for requirements. Even though the GLFR program allows plastic for takeout only, the GLFH program does not allow single-use plastic cups to be used in waterfront or beach bars.



- Energy efficiency efforts are in place. At minimum, rooms must have signage that reminds guests to turn off lights when leaving the rooms.
- Onsite gift shops only sell or provide sunscreen that is reef friendly.
- Inspired by Surfrider Kaua'i Chapter's Ocean Friendly Visitors Program, solo trash cleanup kits are available for guests.
- Light pollution is minimized by all outdoor lighting following Dark Sky practices.⁴
- Hotel landscaping follows Surfrider's Ocean Friendly Garden Program criteria or there is an Ocean Friendly Garden onsite.⁵

4. Examples include installing shielded lights, warm colored lights, lights with lower lumens, motion sensor or timed lighting, and lights mounted as low as possible. See darksky.org for more resources.

5. See surfrider.org for requirements. Hotel grounds with golf courses are not eligible for this optional criteria.

Hotel Benefits

- Marketing collateral including signage and table tents.
- Use of Great Lakes Friendly Hotels logos for websites and other hotel marketing materials.
- Hotel listed on Surfrider national and chapter websites.
- Hotel included in national map on Surfrider national website.
- Launch parties with your nearest Surfrider chapter.
- Access to national vendor discounts on sustainable restaurant and to-go products.
- Tax-deductible donation opportunity.
- Association with a nationally recognized nonprofit with thousands of members and supporters.



Hotels that meet all program criteria will gain recognition as a Platinum Level Great Lakes Friendly Hotel.