



December 2018

To Whom it May Concern,

Surfrider Foundation's Eastern Long Island Chapter has been an advocate for clean water, healthy beaches, coastal protection, and beach access for 20 years on the East End of Long Island, New York.

In recent years, Surfrider Foundation has expanded its plastic pollution programs and campaigns to raise awareness and ultimately reduce the impact of plastic pollution on coastal resources.

Surfrider Foundation Eastern Long Island fully supports banning the intentional release of balloons in all towns and villages within Suffolk County. Surfrider Foundation would also be in support of stronger legislation that similarly reduces the impacts of balloon pollution on our beaches.

Suffolk County Law [§ 310-2](#) states: "No person, nonprofit organization, firm, corporation, or municipality shall knowingly release, organize the release of, condone the release of, or intentionally cause to be released into the atmosphere, within a twenty-four-hour period, 25 or more helium or lighter-than-air gas balloons within the County of Suffolk."

Since the Chapter began collecting data at beach cleanups in June 2017, 6,082 pounds of debris have been removed from beaches between Westhampton Beach and Montauk. **Of 38 beach cleanups held since June 2017, 774 balloons have been found on our beaches,** which averages to about 20 balloons found at each beach.

When balloons enter the marine environment, they take hundreds of years to degrade, threatening marine life through entanglement or ingestion. Mylar balloons in particular also threaten utility supply. During the weekend of July 4th, 2017, a mylar balloon came in contact with a transformer in Southampton Village, leaving over 1,000 homes and businesses without power on one of the busiest, revenue-producing weekends of the year.

Surfrider Eastern Long Island looks forward to waves being made within Suffolk County to reduce balloon pollution on our beaches, and hopes this serves as a gateway to further conversations about ways to reduce the prevalence of single-use plastics on beaches.

Kindly,

Colleen Marie Henn
Chapter Coordinator
Surfrider Foundation, Eastern Long Island Chapter