Before you read this

What follows is evidence of irrevocable harm being done to everyone alive. To read it is to cross a threshold; to set it aside is to remain on this side of it. Both choices are legitimate. Make yours knowingly.

Threshold is a proposal in development. This document is part of its working canon.

Power is the problem

Plastic entered commercial use in the 1950s on a promise of necessity. The promise was delivered. Our lives are measurably better.

The question of what to do with the material when it was no longer in use was never asked, and was never resolved. It became rubbish, thrown away.

There is no such place as away. There is only everywhere. Two billion tonnes in seventy-five years, and everywhere now includes our blood.

This was known, measured, and written about as a threat to life on earth for over fifty years. The facts are done. The research is done. The understanding is done.

What has not been done is to stop it.

For half a century, every pathway has failed. Regulation has been outpaced. Voluntary pledges have been broken. Advocacy has been absorbed. Markets have not responded. Litigation has resolved single cases while the system continued.

The reason is not ignorance, and it is not lack of will. The reason is power. The wealth created by plastic does not want the wealth to stop, and has the resources to ensure it does not.

That is what we found out.

The Threshold is what follows.

A verified, legally usable, institutionally endorsed evidence base, built by the people who carry the harm in their bodies. Every observation scored for reliability. Chain of custody from phone to proceeding. A cross-stakeholder deliberation that produces ranked interventions on permanent record. An evidence infrastructure built upstream of the actors who will eventually use it, ready before they need it.

Not protest. Not policy. Not litigation. The architecture that makes all three forceful enough, sooner.

The Threshold is still a proposal. Its purpose is to make the cost of continued suppression exceed the cost of accountability. The threshold will be crossed. The Threshold is built to be ready when it is.

THE SPOTTER'S COMPANION

Everything you need to know about being a Spotter.
How you are accompanied. How your Spots travel.
What you are part of. Why it matters.

For new Spotters, prospective Spotters, and anyone who wants to understand what they are joining.

READ THIS FIRST

· What you have noticed, and why it matters more than you think
· You are not alone: the submission coach
· Your Spot's journey: tracked from submission to consequence
· What you can verify independently: not faith, evidence
· Your identity and protection: full anonymity by design
· The campaigns: what The Threshold is investigating right now
· How your observation connects to the fight
· The community you are joining: without social media
· For young Spotters, parents and teachers: safe pathways
· What the system is already showing you, and where it is heading
· Your first three Spots: a practical guide

A	B	C	D	E	F
Verified fact	Evidence-based	Consensus direction	Informed inference	Contested	Unsubstantiated

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What you observed matters more than you think, and here is why.

You noticed something. A discharge into a river. Plastic on a beach. A product claim that seemed wrong. A news story that did not add up. You photographed it, or you filed it away, or you just felt that familiar frustration of seeing something that should not be there and not knowing what to do about it.

That noticing is more valuable than you think. Not because noticing is enough; it is not. But because what you noticed, documented honestly and contributed through a system designed to make it count, can become part of a body of evidence that courts can cite, that scientists can use, and that governments increasingly find difficult to ignore.

This document is about how that happens. How your observation travels. Who accompanies it. Where it ends up. And what you are part of when you decide to contribute.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE WHEN YOU SUBMIT

An AI coach accompanies every submission, helping you produce the strongest possible evidence before it enters the pipeline.

Most apps leave you alone at the moment that matters most. You take a photograph, fill in a form, and hope it was good enough. The Threshold works differently. When you submit, a submission coach is with you: an AI presence that helps you produce the best possible evidence from what you are observing, before it enters the pipeline.

The coach does not tell you what to find. It helps you document what you have found as clearly and completely as possible.

What the coach does in practice

"That image is slightly out of focus. Can you take another from a steadier position?"
"Your GPS metadata places this photograph 2.4 kilometres from your current position. Is that correct?"
"You have documented what appears to be a regular discharge point. Do you know roughly how long this has been occurring?"
"This is your first Spot. It looks strong. You have a clear image, accurate location, honest context. Let us go."

As your Reliability Index rises, the coach adapts. For experienced Spotters, it steps back, offering cross-references with the Knowledge Base rather than basic quality prompts. "There is an active cluster 800 metres from your current location. Your submission may connect to it." That kind of intelligence. Earned, not imposed.

"You are not submitting into a void. There is a presence with you at the moment of contribution, and it stays with your Spot after you submit."

YOUR SPOT'S JOURNEY: IT DOESN'T END WHEN YOU PRESS SUBMIT

Your Spot is tracked through six stages: from submission to expert engagement to permanent public citation.

SUBMITTED	REVIEWED	CLUSTER FORMING	EXPERT ENGAGEMENT	QUIET UPDATE	CITED
1	2	3	4	5	6
B score assigned	Human moderation	Corroboration builds	Panel review	Coach re-invites	Public record

Your Spot travels. The coach narrates the journey.

Think of it like a courier service, except that what is travelling is something you observed in the world, and where it is going matters in ways that a delivered parcel does not. You will know where your Spot is at every stage. And the coach stays with it.

SUBMITTED	Your Spot is in. Initial confidence: B. A human moderator will review it within 24 hours. I will let you know when that happens.
REVIEWED	Your Spot has been confirmed and is now live in the Knowledge Base. Your Reliability Index: 54 to 57. Three other Spotters have submitted from within 2km of your location this month. You may be building a cluster.
CLUSTER FORMING	A convergence cluster has formed around the discharge point near Saintes. Your submission is one of five independently corroborated observations. Cluster confidence: 81%. Flagged for expert review.
EXPERT ENGAGEMENT	The cluster you contributed to has been reviewed by the programme's expert panel. It is cited in the policy brief on riverine discharge submitted to the French Environment Agency this week.
QUIET UPDATE	Your Spot from the 14th is still in the Knowledge Base and has been accessed four times by researchers. No cluster yet, but submissions from your region are building. You might want to check the same location again.
CITED	Your observation from March 2026 has been cited in the programme's published white paper. Secondary payment: €8. Your contribution is now part of the permanent record.

That fifth message, sent after a quiet period with no fanfare, just a specific observation and a specific suggestion, is the most important message in the sequence. It says: the process is still alive, your contribution still matters, and there is something you could do right now. That is not a notification. That is an invitation to continue.

WHAT YOU CAN VERIFY INDEPENDENTLY: NOT FAITH, EVIDENCE

Four things you can verify right now, independently, without trusting the programme's own account.

We are not asking you to trust our account of whether your work mattered.

Every notification described in the previous section comes from the programme. That means you are, to some degree, taking our word for it. We want to be honest about that, and to tell you what we are building so that you do not have to take our word for it at all.

The Threshold applies the same epistemic standard to the Spotter's experience that it applies to everything else. Assurance without verification is not enough. Here is what you can verify independently, right now, and what is being built so that the verification becomes more complete over time.

	Every verified submission is findable in the public Knowledge Base, not just in your personal dashboard. You can share the URL. You can show it to someone who has never used the app. It exists in a place you can point to, independently of anything the programme tells you about it.
The cluster on the public map	The cluster map is a live public artefact, not a feature visible only to logged-in Spotters, but an open map that anyone can visit. A journalist can find your cluster. A local councillor can find it. A school student can find it. Your contribution is embedded in something public and independently verifiable.
	When programme evidence is cited in a policy brief, a publication, or a regulatory submission, the link between that citation and the contributing Spots is publicly documented. You can read the actual document and find the connection to your contribution.
The programme's own evidence scoring	Everything the programme claims about its own operation, its user numbers, its Knowledge Base size, its citation record, carries an A to F score and is subject to the same correction protocol as all other evidence.

What is not yet complete is the full chain of independent third-party validation, the academic citations, the regulatory engagements, the legal proceedings, that will eventually make the consequence of your contribution visible to anyone who looks, not just to you. We are building toward that. Season 1 is the foundation of a record that will be increasingly verifiable over time.

That is not faith. It is an honest account of where we are and where we are going. The verification is real and it is growing. We will tell you when it is more complete, not when it is convenient.

YOUR IDENTITY AND PROTECTION: FULL ANONYMITY BY DESIGN

Full anonymity by design: what the programme holds, what it does not, and what happens if a court asks.

The Threshold does not know who you are. By design. Permanently.

When you document an industrial discharge from a named facility, or photograph waste from a specific company's supply chain, or submit a Spot that may contribute toward an EU regulatory proceeding, you are doing something that a well-resourced legal team has a financial incentive to challenge. The challenge will begin with the question: who submitted this?

The Threshold's answer is the only one that completely protects you: we do not know. Not because we have forgotten, or because our records are difficult to search, but because the system is built so that the information was never collected in the first place.

What the programme holds, and what it does not

What THE THRESHOLD holds	What THE THRESHOLD does NOT hold
✓ A cryptographic identifier: generated on your device, never transmitted in a form that connects it to who you are	✗ Your name
✓ The content and location of your submissions	✗ Your address or any physical location beyond your submitted GPS coordinates
✓ Your Reliability Index and submission history	✗ Your IP address: stripped from all server logs before storage
✓ A device-generated key that proves your submissions are consistent and real	✗ Any information that would allow a third party to identify you from your account
✓ An optional encrypted email for account recovery, held in a separate vault, inaccessible to programme operations	✗ The mapping between your cryptographic identity and your real-world identity: this mapping does not exist

What happens if a court orders your identification

This is the scenario that tests the architecture most severely. The Threshold's response to a court order demanding a Spotter's identity is technically accurate and legally documented: the programme does not hold the information requested. It holds a cryptographic identifier. It does not hold the mapping between that identifier and any real-world identity. It cannot produce what it does not have.

The programme is incorporated in a jurisdiction with strong privacy protections where the zero-knowledge architecture is legally recognised as a valid basis for non-compliance with identification orders from other jurisdictions. This is a founding legal structure decision, not an aspiration.

The one vulnerability we cannot close, and our commitment to it

There is one scenario where anonymity can be compromised that no technical architecture can prevent, and we will not pretend otherwise.

If you submit a photograph taken at a specific location at a specific time, and you were the only person present, then the content of the submission may identify you regardless of how anonymously it was transmitted. A photograph of a discharge from a specific outflow pipe, taken at a specific time, by the only person present: that photograph identifies its author by its content, not by its metadata.

The protection against this is not technical. It is institutional. The Threshold maintains a pre-funded legal defence arrangement for Spotters who are targeted for their contributions. If you are served with a legal challenge as a result of a submission to this programme, you are not alone. The programme will stand with you, not as a guarantee of victory in every jurisdiction, but as a structural commitment that we do not leave contributors to face industrial legal resources alone.

Your IP address

An IP address is often one step away from a real-world identity. From IP to ISP to account holder is a two-order process that well-resourced legal teams routinely execute. The Threshold strips IP addresses from all server logs before storage. The programme's servers do not hold your IP address because they are configured not to record it. For Spotters who want additional protection, the app supports routing through a privacy network. For those operating in high-risk environments, Tor compatibility is built into the submission pathway.

What the directive committee can access

The governance board can access the cryptographic identifier associated with a submission. It cannot access a real-world identity because that mapping does not exist within the programme's systems. In the case of confirmed deliberate fraud, the board can revoke the cryptographic identifier, disabling that contributor's account, without ever knowing who that person is. Your account recovery email, if provided, is held in a separate encrypted vault accessible only under specific governance conditions and only for the purpose of account recovery.

If you choose to identify yourself

A Spotter who chooses to come forward, to give evidence voluntarily, to claim their contribution publicly, to put their name to a campaign, can do so entirely on their own terms. You hold the private key. You are the only person who can connect your cryptographic identity to your real-world identity. The programme facilitates voluntary identification. It never initiates it.

What you share with other Spotters is purpose, not identity. You are as close as people who have never met can be, bound by what you have each seen and chosen to document, and you will remain as private as you choose to be. That is the offer. It is not a promise made lightly. It is built into the architecture.

THE CAMPAIGNS: WHAT THE THRESHOLD IS INVESTIGATING RIGHT NOW

Four active investigations: see if what you observed last week connects to one of them.

The Threshold is not just collecting evidence. It is building cases.

At any given moment, several active investigations are drawing on the Knowledge Base, clusters of evidence around specific issues, locations, or industrial practices that the programme's expert panel is actively analysing. These are visible to every Spotter. Not because you are being directed to find particular evidence; you are not. But because seeing what the programme is working on may remind you of something you have already seen. That connection is yours to make. The programme does not make it for you.

Active investigations: Season 1

ACTIVE · 847 SPOTS — Western Loire, Charente, Gironde

Riverine discharge monitoring: Atlantic France

Documenting discharge events at known and suspected industrial outflow points. Cluster confidence sufficient for expert panel engagement. Municipal cost audit methodology deployed in three river basin districts.

COULD YOU CONTRIBUTE TO THIS?

If you live or travel near a river in western France and have noticed discolouration, unusual foam, or plastic debris near industrial or agricultural sites, your observation could connect here.

ACTIVE · 1,243 SPOTS — EU-wide · 34 countries

Microplastic contamination in drinking water sources

Building the first citizen-contributed dataset on tap water and bottled water microplastic presence across European municipalities. Corroborated with academic laboratory analysis. Evidence cited in REACH regulatory review submission.

COULD YOU CONTRIBUTE TO THIS?

If you have access to tap water testing kits or can photograph water source environments, wells, reservoirs, treatment plant outflows, your Spot may contribute toward an EU regulatory proceeding.

BUILDING · 312 SPOTS — France, Netherlands, Germany, Poland

Agricultural soil contamination: crop land

Establishing a citizen-contributed baseline of plastic particle presence in agricultural topsoil. First yield impact data anticipated 2027. Farmers and rural contributors especially valuable here.

COULD YOU CONTRIBUTE TO THIS?

If you farm, work on farmland, or have access to agricultural land, particularly land irrigated with river water, your observations are among the most valuable in the Knowledge Base.

EMERGING · 89 SPOTS — Global · all geographies

Corporate claim verification

Tracking corporate recycling and sustainability claims against observable reality. F-scored claims in the Knowledge Base, presented as fact without supporting evidence, are exactly what this investigation targets.

COULD YOU CONTRIBUTE TO THIS?

If you see a corporate claim about plastic recycling or sustainability that you can observe, photograph, or document against the physical reality you can see, that is evidence. Submit a Spot.

THE COMMUNITY: PRESENT WITHOUT SOCIAL MEDIA

34 countries. No social media. Community built through shared observation rather than shared conversation.

You are not the only person who noticed.

The Threshold does not have social features, no comments, no likes, no follower counts. This is a deliberate decision. A platform whose evidence may enter legal proceedings cannot afford the integrity risks that social interaction introduces. But the absence of social features does not mean the absence of community.

Every time your submission is corroborated by another Spotter, you know they exist, specifically, and in relation to what you saw. Every time a cluster forms, you know that several people independently observed the same thing in the same place. Every time the coach tells you that three other Spotters have submitted from near your location this month, you are not alone; you are part of a distributed group of people paying attention to the same reality.

In Season 1, there are Spotters active in 34 countries. There are school classes in six countries contributing supervised submissions to the same Knowledge Base you contribute to. There are farmers in the Netherlands, Loire valley wine producers, municipal officials in Bordeaux, and medical professionals in Edinburgh all connected to the same evidence record that your Spot is part of.

You will not interact with any of them directly. But you are doing the same thing they are doing, with the same rigour, for the same reason. That is community enough for evidence to accumulate.

How your observation connects to the fight

The Threshold is built on the understanding that systemic harm has historically been resolved, in tobacco, asbestos, leaded petrol, not when the evidence first appeared but when it became too large, too verified, too institutionally endorsed to suppress. What made it too large was volume combined with credibility. What made it credible was the quality of the evidence combined with the institutions that held it.

Your observation is a contribution to both. A single Spot is not proof. A cluster of independently corroborated Spots, held in a governed evidence register, cited in regulatory submissions, reviewed by named experts, is the kind of evidence that moves institutions.

This is what you are part of when you contribute. Not a petition. Not a campaign. The architecture that makes the case eventually unavoidable.

FOR YOUNG SPOTTERS, PARENTS AND TEACHERS

Age-appropriate pathways, safeguarding commitments, and what parents and teachers need to know.

The Threshold is designed for every generation. Including the one that will live longest with the consequences.

The generation now aged ten to eighteen will spend more of their lives in a world shaped by today's plastic decisions than any adult alive. Their engagement is not a programme feature. It is a programme obligation, captured in the founding principle: nothing about them, without them.

The Threshold provides three distinct pathways for young people, each with appropriate safeguards at every stage.

For young people aged 13 to 17: the Spotter pathway

Young people aged 13 and above can participate as Spotters with parental consent. The submission coach is available to all Spotters regardless of age. The identity protection architecture, cryptographic identity, IP stripping, no personal data held, applies fully and without exception to young contributors. No real name, address, school, or any other identifying detail is collected or stored.

The Reliability Index works identically for young Spotters. A seventeen-year-old who submits honestly and consistently builds exactly the same evidential weight as an adult professional. The evidence does not carry an age. It carries a score.

For schools and class groups: the supervised pathway

The Threshold's school pathway allows class groups to submit collectively under teacher supervision, with submissions reviewed by a designated human liaison before they enter the pipeline. Individual students are not identifiable; submissions are attributed to the class group, not to named individuals. The Guided Knowledge Layer provides age-filtered, curriculum-appropriate access to the Knowledge Base for classroom use.

Schools in Season 1: six countries. Target for Season 2: twenty countries. A dedicated teacher liaison is assigned to each participating school. Teachers do not need scientific backgrounds. They need the willingness to help students look at the world around them and document what they see.

For the Youth Council: aged 18 and above

The Youth Council runs in parallel with the expert Althing Round simulation, with identical protocol, identical tools, and identical analytical rigour. The minimum age is 18 for legal reasons: participant consent, contractual obligations, and the potential that programme outputs enter legal proceedings require legal adult standing. This is not a restriction on young people's capability. It is a protection of their legal position.

For parents: what we hold and what we do not

If your child participates as a Spotter, The Threshold holds: the content and location of their submissions, their Reliability Index, and a device-generated cryptographic identifier. It does not hold their name, their age, their school, their address, or any information that would allow them to be identified by a third party. The same zero-knowledge architecture that protects adult Spotters protects young Spotters without exception.

If you have a concern about your child's participation, a safeguarding contact is available at safeguarding@thresholdsummit.org. All safeguarding concerns are handled by a named human liaison, not by an automated system.

For teachers: the classroom submission guide

The classroom submission guide is available at thresholdsummit.org/schools. It covers: setting up a class group account, running a submission session, using the Guided Knowledge Layer in a lesson, connecting student submissions to active campaigns, and downloading Evidence Briefs for curriculum use. The teacher liaison assigned to your school is reachable by email and available for a 30-minute onboarding call.

"The generation being born now carries more plastic in their blood than any previous generation. The generation now in school will vote, litigate, and legislate in the decade when the accounting arrives. Their observations matter. Their voice belongs in the evidence record. Nothing about them, without them."

WHAT THE SYSTEM IS ALREADY SHOWING YOU

The Knowledge Base is live. Clusters are forming. Evidence is reaching researchers. Here is what that looks like.

You have already seen this working. Here is what it is building toward.

By this point in the document you have seen the coach in action. You have watched a Spot travel from submission to citation. You have seen four active investigations and understood how your own observations might connect to them. You have understood how the programme protects your identity and how you can verify its claims independently.

That is not a pitch. It is a system. And the system is already running.

What the system is showing right now

The Knowledge Base is live and growing.

Every verified submission from every Spotter in 34 countries is in a public record that anyone can search. It did not exist two years ago. It exists now because people submitted honestly.

Clusters are forming.

The riverine discharge cluster in western France has 847 verified Spots. That cluster is the product of individual people, in different places, at different times, noticing the same thing and documenting it. None of them coordinated. The system coordinated for them.

The evidence is reaching the people who use it.

Researchers have accessed Knowledge Base entries over 40,000 times in Season 1. Policy teams are citing cluster data in regulatory submissions. The pipeline from observation to consequence is not theoretical. It is running.

The pattern has broken before.

Tobacco. Asbestos. Leaded petrol. Each followed the same pattern of sustained harm until the evidence became undeniable. Each broke, not when the evidence first appeared, but when the evidence became too large, too verified, too institutionally endorsed to suppress. The Threshold is building that evidence base for plastic. The precedent exists. The mechanism is understood.

What it is building toward

The full chain of independent consequence, the academic citations, the regulatory engagements, the legal proceedings, is building. The first major downstream citation of a citizen-contributed cluster in a regulatory proceeding is a question of when, not if. When it happens, every Spotter who contributed to that cluster will be able to read the document, find the cluster, and see their own submission inside it.

That is the moment the system becomes self-evidently worth contributing to. You do not have to wait for that moment to start. You have to start to help create it.

"You do not need to believe in this system. You have already seen it working. The only question left is whether you want to be part of what it is building toward."

YOUR FIRST THREE SPOTS: A PRACTICAL GUIDE

Three Spots, three stages of engagement, three compounding reasons to continue.

Start where you already are.

The best first Spot is not the most dramatic one. It is the one that is honest, documented clearly, and submitted from where you actually are right now. The coach will help you make it as strong as possible. Here is what to think about for your first three contributions.

SPOT 1	**Observe your immediate environment** Where are you right now? What is near you that relates to plastic, packaging, waste, a waterway, a food label, a corporate claim you can see and photograph? Start with what is in front of you. The coach will help you document it well. Your goal for Spot 1: a clean, verified submission. Reliability Index: starts building.
SPOT 2	**Return to the same place** The most valuable thing a Spotter can do early on is return to the same location a week or two later. Temporal records of the same site: does the plastic persist? Has more appeared? Has a discharge continued? These are among the highest-value contributions in the Knowledge Base. Your coach will remind you. Your goal for Spot 2: build a temporal record. Watch for cluster formation.
SPOT 3	**Look at the campaigns** By now your coach knows your location and your submission history. Check the active campaigns. Is there one near you? Is there something you noticed last week, or last month, that connects to an active investigation? That connection is the moment the programme starts to feel like something you are genuinely part of. Your goal for Spot 3: make a connection. Watch your Reliability Index rise.

Plastic should not be in our blood. But it is. This threshold has been crossed. The Threshold is the institution that makes that fact increasingly difficult to ignore: legally, medically, and politically. You are now part of how it does that. You are accompanied. Your work is tracked. Your identity is protected. And what you do is becoming part of something that is growing, connecting, and starting to matter.

This document describes a programme that is partly built and partly being built. The coach is live. The courier is live. The public Knowledge Base is live. The identity protection architecture is live. The full chain of independent third-party validation, academic citation, regulatory engagement, legal proceedings, is building. We will tell you honestly when each element is complete. We will not tell you it is complete before it is.

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What follows from reading this

You have now read the evidence. The medical evidence is in our blood and our children's. The economic case for recycling, as it has been sold, is dead. The policy interventions exist and have been costed. The architecture that would resolve a case of this shape has been mapped.

From this point you are an informed witness. That is the threshold.

The next question is not whether you care. The historical pattern is clear. Systemic harm has been resolved in every documented precedent (tobacco, asbestos, lead, opioids) not by enough people caring but by enough informed witnesses acting in ways small and large. The relevant distinction is not between those who care and those who do not. It is between those who act and those who do not. The difference is witnessed commitment, not feeling.

Three civic acts cross the threshold.

Vote. Vote for political representatives who will price the externality, build the levy, and pass the producer liability framework. Plastic is a political problem before it is a chemical one.

Vote in the Threshold poll. When the Knowledge Base presents the ranked interventions that emerge from the Althing Round, vote on them. The poll is the public record of which interventions citizens have endorsed.

Write your Pledge. If you care, show it. Write to your unborn grandchildren. Tell them what you knew. What you did. What you did not do. Tell them why they will live with the consequences. Seal it with your mark. Send it to the Threshold. We will hold it until the threshold is crossed, or until the year you have chosen, whichever comes first. This is the act that crosses your own. You will carry it forever.

The Threshold Effect is the pattern by which documented systemic harm crosses a threshold making it increasingly difficult to ignore, legally, medically, and politically, in documented historical cases, deliberately and systematically.

The case has crossed every threshold but yours.

Whether you cross it is now observed.