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.

THRESHOLD | thresholdsummit.org

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.

THRESHOLD | thresholdsummit.org

THE THRESHOLD

A global view of the programme that turns citizen observations into evidence, and evidence into the structural change that courts, governments and markets cannot ignore.

THE FOUNDING TRUTH

Plastic shouldn't 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.

- A personal question: before you read further
- The problem: if nothing changes
- Why hundreds of millions of engaged people have not been enough
- The Threshold Effect: naming the pattern
- The political trap: vested interest vs public will
- Journalism and an evidence-hungry media landscape
- What The Threshold is: the solution
- The Knowledge Base: the living heart of the programme
- The Independence Charter and Initiative governance
- The Youth Council: nothing about them, without them
- Budget, timeline and urgency
- Join The Threshold

Including: Threshold Effect © Andrew Henderson, Marans, France, June 2026

AUTHORSHIP AND COMPILATION NOTE

This document has been compiled by Andrew Henderson, Lead Architect of The Threshold Summit, drawing on the body of strategic analysis, policy research, market data, and programme design work developed in Marans, France in June 2026 . Henderson is architect and principal author of all underlying research, programme design, and analytical frameworks reflected here. The Threshold Effect concept (including its application to plastic contamination as The Plastic Threshold) is the original intellectual work of Andrew Henderson and is credited accordingly throughout this document.

The Threshold is an independent initiative. It is not affiliated with any commercial, political, or governmental body. No funder influences its findings at any investment level.

Section A

A personal question: before you read further

You did not commission this. The people who built the plastics economy were not trying to harm you. They were solving a different problem, and the consequences were known to them long before they were known to you. That gap, between what was known and what was done about it, is what this programme exists to close.

How do you feel knowing that male fertility rates across the developed world have fallen by more than 50% since 1973, and that the leading explanation includes lifelong exposure to chemicals found in plastics?

How do you feel knowing that your children are being born with measurable plastic particles already in their blood, their lungs, and their developing brains, before they draw their first breath?

These are published, peer-reviewed clinical findings. They describe what has already been measured. This document is about what we intend to do about them.

A Microplastic particles have been detected in human cord blood, placental tissue, and foetal brains in peer-reviewed studies. The children being born today are the most plastic-contaminated generation in human history. *Ragusa et al. (2021), placenta. Landrigan et al. (2023), foetal brain. Multiple independent replications. A-scored: uncontested in the mainstream scientific literature to date.*

B Male sperm counts in the developed world have fallen by approximately 50% over fifty years. Endocrine-disrupting chemicals in plastics are identified in current research as a significant contributing factor to the observed decline. Some reading this may not have grandchildren, not because of any choice their children make, but because of something done to them before they were born. *Levine et al. (2017) Human Reproduction Update; 2022 follow-up. Direction of decline established. Grandchildren inference: D-level projection from B-level trends, stated as possibility, not certainty.*

This is not a document about litter. It is a document about what we are doing to our own biology, and what a group of people in France, in June 2026 , have decided to do about it.

Section 1

The problem: if nothing changes

The world is drowning in plastic. Slowly. Measurably. And with near-total political impunity.

Every year, humanity produces around 460 million tonnes of plastic. Less than ten percent is ever recycled. The rest escapes into oceans, rivers, soil, air, and into every living body on this planet, including our own.

460Mt	<10%	22Mt	4.5×	>50%
Plastic produced every year	Ever recycled globally	Leaks to environment every year	Elevated cardiac risk from microplastics	Fall in male sperm counts since 1973

"Nobody can predict the future with certainty. But the probability that everything gets worse (absent structural action) is, based on published science and OECD economic modelling, almost certain."

What the next decade looks like: if nothing changes

The four scenario horizons below represent the author's projections, constructed from OECD baseline data and informed by direct experience in European plastics markets and recycling economics. They are possible scenarios with high probability, not forecasts in the strict sense.

12 months · 2027
+22 million more tonnes

A brief market window from geopolitical disruption partially revives recycling, but the infrastructure to use it has been dismantled. Another 22 million tonnes escape into the environment.

2 years · 2028
+60 million more tonnes

The window closes. A second recycler collapse wave begins. Scientists establish the first direct causal link between microplastic exposure and specific disease. The first producer liability lawsuits are filed.

5 years · 2031
+150 million more tonnes

The first generation born with documented prenatal plastic exposure reaches fifteen. The word ‘irreversible’ appears consistently in peer-reviewed papers. Healthcare costs attributable to plastic disease reach €50–150Bn per year in Europe.

10 years · 2036
+300 million more tonnes

Children born today carry more microplastics than any prior generation. Rebuilding the recycling capacity that could have existed in 2026 costs 3–5 times more. Legal settlements are restructuring the industry, decades too late.

Section 2

The consequences: health, fertility, children

This is not an environmental story. It is a human health story that happens to have an environmental cause.

Microplastics have been detected in human blood, breast milk, placental tissue, foetal organs, and arterial walls. A landmark 2024 study in NEJM found an association between microplastics in arterial plaques and a 4.5 times higher rate of heart attacks, strokes, and death. This is a clinically observed association in human tissue, not a laboratory model, not an animal study, but a finding in living people. The causal mechanism is the subject of active research.

Body system	Status as of 2026	Trajectory to 2036
Cardiovascular	4.5x elevated cardiac risk: clinically observed association in human tissue; causal mechanism under active research	Risk confirmed across larger cohorts; enters standard clinical guidance

Body system	Status as of 2026	Trajectory to 2036
Fertility	Male sperm counts down >50% since 1973; endocrine-disrupting chemicals in plastics identified as a significant contributing factor	Continued decline; fertility treatment costs escalate
Neurological	Microplastics detected crossing blood-brain barrier: clinical concern, not yet fully causal	First paediatric data on intrauterine-exposure cohort published
Respiratory	Lung microplastic accumulation linked to elevated COPD and asthma risk	Causal link approaches clinical confirmation
Developmental (children)	First generation with intrauterine exposure; cord blood levels rising	First 10-year longitudinal data; findings unlikely to be reassuring
Reproductive (female)	Endometriosis, PCOS associations with plastic chemical exposure documented	Legal class actions initiated; clinical guidance updated

Section 3

Why hundreds of millions of engaged people have not been enough

The scale of public concern is extraordinary. The gap between that concern and policy outcome is the structural failure this programme exists to close.

700M+	800M	250M+	77%	8M
Social media users engaged	Environmental app registered users	Petition signatures on plastic	EU consumers wanting refill options	Active citizen science participants

Why the numbers have not translated into structural change

Engagement without evidence has no legal standing. A petition, however large, cannot be cited in a courtroom. It is dismissed as emotional preference. The Threshold converts public observation into verified, trust-weighted evidence that carries legal and institutional weight.

Engagement without constituency architecture has no institutional leverage. Two million anonymous signatures carry far less weight than ten thousand named, verified medical professionals co-signing a formal declaration, fifty city governments publishing quantified cost audits, and named pension funds formally requesting producer liability disclosure.

Engagement without coordination dissipates its energy. Millions of individually concerned people are not, without a coordinating structure, a political force. The Threshold provides that structure.

> *"The question is not whether enough people care. They demonstrably do. The question is whether caring can be structured into something that courts, governments, and capital markets cannot ignore."*

Section 4

The Threshold Effect: naming the pattern

Why this keeps happening, and why naming it changes the response.

Plastic pollution is not an accident. It is the predictable outcome of a specific and recurring pattern in human industrial systems, one that has played out before, with tobacco, with asbestos, with leaded petrol. This pattern has a name, identified and named by Andrew Henderson, Marans, France, June 2026 .

THE THRESHOLD EFFECT

© Andrew Henderson, June 2026

When a technology, substance, or industrial practice produces immediate concentrated benefit and deferred dispersed cost, the actors who benefit tend to suppress or delay accountability (in documented historical cases, deliberately and systematically) and to influence regulatory systems and decision-making processes, normalising the deviation from safety for as long as the cost of suppression remains lower than the cost of accountability.

This continues until a threshold is crossed: the point at which the consequences become too large, too visible, and too attributable to be suppressed further. At that moment the full architecture of harm becomes legible for the first time: the causal chain traceable, the actors identifiable, the damages quantifiable.

The threshold is not chosen. It announces itself.

It is often crossed too late to prevent most of the harm.

It can only determine the character of the accounting that follows.

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THE ONLY INTERVENTION THAT CHANGES THE OUTCOME ARRIVES BEFORE THE THRESHOLD.

The Threshold Effect describes a pattern, not a destiny. It is not inevitable in every case, and it is not beyond interruption. It is a pattern sustained by choices, and choices, unlike natural laws, can be reversed. That is the only reason this document exists: because the sequence described here is written in decisions. And decisions can be unmade.

Harari observed that falsehood is cheap and easy to manufacture while truth is expensive, slow, and risky to establish. This asymmetry is precisely how the Threshold Effect is sustained: the counter-narrative costs almost nothing to produce; the evidence that dismantles it costs years and millions. The Threshold is designed to reduce the cost of truth, building shared verification infrastructure so that the expensive work of establishing fact is done once and the result is available to everyone who needs it: journalists, litigators, policymakers, researchers, city governments.

This is not the boiled frog. The frog does not know the water is heating. The plastic industry knew. This is not the butterfly effect; the butterfly does not intend the tornado. The consequences were foreseeable, foreseen, and deliberately concealed. The intent is what makes this a different order of moral and legal problem.

THE PLASTIC THRESHOLD: WHAT MAKES THIS INSTANCE DIFFERENT FROM ALL PREVIOUS ONES

Tobacco, asbestos, and leaded petrol all followed the Threshold Effect pattern. In each case the harm was suppressed until undeniable. In each case the harm was contained within the generation that experienced it. The damage did not cross the reproductive threshold.

Plastic contamination has crossed the reproductive threshold. Microplastics have been documented in placental tissue, cord blood, and foetal brains. The next generation arrives pre-loaded. This is the Accumulated Biological Debt: a loan taken against the biological systems of every subsequent generation, with interest compounding in the bodies of the unborn.

The debt cannot be defaulted on. It is written into biology, not balance sheets.

Section 5

The political trap: vested interest vs public will

Politicians know what the evidence says. The trap is that knowing and acting are separated by money.

The political failure to act is not primarily a failure of knowledge. The OECD has explicitly called for a plastic tax rising to $750 per tonne by 2060. The EU's own Environment Commissioner has acknowledged the industry is in 'deep crisis.' No binding production cap exists anywhere on earth.

The financial scale of the opposing interest

The petrochemical industry is the largest industrial sector on earth by capital value. As fossil fuel demand for energy declines with electrification, plastics have explicitly become its primary growth strategy. New cracker capacity coming online 2026–2029 in the US Gulf Coast, Middle East, and China will add more than 50 million additional tonnes of annual polymer capacity, systematically undermining any price recovery for recycled material. The lobbying budgets of major petrochemical and packaging industry associations run to hundreds of millions of dollars annually in Brussels, Washington, and other legislative capitals.

THE TOBACCO PRECEDENT: WHY THE THRESHOLD EFFECT EVENTUALLY BREAKS

For forty years, the tobacco industry maintained its product was not proven to cause cancer. That argument held, until the evidence became unassailable, the litigation became financially existential, and state governments quantified their healthcare costs.

The final US settlement recovered $206 billion. The plastic industry is approximately ten years behind tobacco on this trajectory. The Threshold is designed to accelerate the arrival of the moment when the legal and political cost of continued inaction permanently exceeds the cost of acting. The Threshold Effect is not inevitable. It is sustained by choices. Choices can be reversed.

Section 6

Journalism: a landscape hungry for evidence

The media landscape is not the enemy of this story. It is one of its most powerful amplifiers.

The problem serious journalists face is not a lack of editorial interest. It is a lack of reliable, institutionally credible, legally defensible evidence that they can cite without equivocation. The Threshold produces exactly this.

Media type	What they need	What the programme provides
Investigative print (Guardian, Spiegel, Le Monde)	Credible, legally defensible data with institutional backing	Fact/Opinion-scored Knowledge Base; citizen evidence clusters; expert consensus rankings
Science journalism (Nature, Science, New Scientist)	Peer-reviewed data; institutional endorsement	Academic citation pathway; convergence-scored evidence data
Broadcast and documentary (BBC, Arte, Netflix)	Narrative access; programmatic structure	The documentary series from the Althing Round simulation process
Digital and independent (substacks, newsletters)	Shareable, graded evidence; weekly hooks	Signal/Noise A-F graded feed; Ledger Live counters; Pulse results maps
Local and regional press	Local evidence; local costs; local officials on record	City cost audits; geographic Spotter clusters; municipal commitments
Academic and specialist (journals, policy)	Verified datasets; citation-ready evidence	The Knowledge Base as a citable structured dataset; Fact/Opinion audit trail

> *"Journalism is hungry for what this programme produces: evidence that is graded, verified, institutionally endorsed, and legally defensible. The shortage has never been editorial interest. It has been the evidence itself."*

Section 7

The solution: what The Threshold is

The Threshold is not a campaign. Not a petition platform. Not a charity that publishes reports. It is something that does not currently exist.

A structured, institutionally governed programme that simultaneously produces credible expert analysis, builds an unprecedented public constituency behind that analysis, and delivers both into the policy and legal systems that have the power to act.

COMPONENT 1 · PUBLIC	COMPONENT 2 · CLOSED	COMPONENT 3 · PUBLIC
The App: The Threshold	**The Expert Simulation: The Althing Round**	**The Story: Documentary, Podcast and Policy**

A free global application turning anyone's observation into verified, trust-weighted evidence. A submission coach accompanies every contribution, helping Spotters produce the strongest possible evidence before it enters the pipeline. After submission, the coach narrates the journey stage by stage, from initial review through cluster formation to downstream citation. Contributors are not submitting into a void. They are accompanied, and their evidence is tracked.	A 24-month structured online simulation. Twelve experts play named character roles representing authentic institutional positions. They produce a ranked list of interventions: which policies work, in what order, and why.	A documentary series, podcast, policy publications, and public engagement cascade translate expert findings into a form the world can act on.

The chain of change: how every element connects

Each element creates the conditions for the next. A citizen's observation in a river delta can become part of a legal proceeding against a plastic producer through this chain.

Step 1

Observation becomes verified evidence

A citizen submits through the app. AI classifies and scores it. Other citizens corroborate it independently. A human expert validator decides whether it enters the official evidence record.

Step 2

Evidence builds the Reliability Index

Each submission builds a publicly visible score based on accuracy, consistency, and corroboration. Trust is earned slowly and lost quickly, exactly as in professional journalism and peer-reviewed science.

Step 3

Evidence enters the Knowledge Base

Verified submissions are integrated into the Knowledge Base: the central intelligence of the programme. Every entry carries a Fact/Opinion score from A to F. The Knowledge Base feeds the simulation, the app, journalists, researchers, academics, schools, and litigators simultaneously.

Step 4

The expert simulation analyses the evidence

Twelve expert participants, each playing a named character, use the Knowledge Base as their evidence foundation. Over four Scoring Rounds and a scenario analysis, they produce a ranked list of interventions.

Step 5

Findings reach the public

The documentary and podcast tell the story without breaching confidentiality. The ranked findings are communicated in a form that is compelling and actionable.

Step 6

The public adds institutional weight

Citizens act at six levels, from a two-minute signature to a formal investor disclosure request. City governments commission cost audits. Pension funds request producer liability disclosure.

Step 7

Evidence enters legal proceedings

Citizens who opt in create a verified witness pipeline. Municipal cost audits create a quantified liability database. The legal architecture for producer liability is built from evidence that is trust-weighted and institutionally endorsed.

The expert characters: twelve authentic positions

The twelve participants are not chosen to agree. They represent the full landscape of genuine institutional positions, including positions in fundamental tension. The simulation gives them space to say things they cannot say in their professional roles.

Character	Who they represent	Their central tension
The Producer	Major plastics manufacturing executive	Knows liability is coming, waiting for a competitor to move first
The Recycler	Processing plant operator	Facing a third closure wave; needs policy certainty to survive
The Mayor	Municipal leader, river delta region	Pays the clean-up costs; has no power over upstream production
The Health Analyst	National public health researcher	The data is correct, but institutional credibility is contested
The Young Activist	Youth policy lead, 18–20, mandate from 200+ young people	First generation with documented plastic exposure before birth
The Insurer	Major reinsurance company director	Pricing the uninsurable, with existential interest in early action
The Brand Owner	Consumer goods procurement director	Caught between cheap packaging and reputational collapse
The Scientist	Epidemiologist and toxicologist	Has data they cannot say publicly; the simulation is the safe space
The Diplomat	Trade negotiator, small island state	Least production, most exposure, moral weight without power
The Litigation Funder	Senior partner, legal finance firm	Already modelling producer exposure, watching for the tobacco moment
The Farmer	Cereal producer on contaminated land	Plastic particles in food crops: the agricultural productivity case
The Regulator	Mid-level official, major regulatory body	Knows exactly where political constraints are; the simulation is the only safe space to say so

Two distinct modes. The Knowledge Base and Spotter network are evidence-neutral: they collect, verify, score, and publish observations without advocacy or interpretation. What decision-makers conclude from that

evidence is their determination, not the programme's. The Althing Round operates differently: it takes the verified evidence base and applies expert analytical judgment to produce ranked policy recommendations, the programme's deliberate contribution to the policy debate. The Threshold Effect, the pattern by which industrial harm is sustained through suppression of accountability (in documented historical cases deliberately and systematically), is the analytical framework that explains why evidence alone has historically been insufficient, and why the expert simulation layer exists alongside the evidence collection layer.

Section 8

The Knowledge Base: the living heart of the programme

The Knowledge Base is the intelligence at the centre of everything.

Every element of The Threshold feeds into, and is fed by, a single central structure: the Knowledge Base. It is not a library. It is a living intelligence system, continuously updated by every submission that passes through the verification pipeline, every academic paper ingested by the AI analysis layer, every policy document scored by expert simulation participants, and every public Pulse question answered by hundreds of thousands of citizens.

Every entry in the Knowledge Base carries a Fact/Opinion score from A to F. An F-scored assertion is not removed; it is published with its score visible. This is itself valuable data: it shows where a stakeholder's position is built on assertion rather than evidence. The system does not claim to determine absolute truth. It claims something more modest and more durable: that every piece of evidence it holds can be examined, challenged, and corrected, and that the patterns which survive that process are increasingly difficult to dismiss.

This same A-F scale is applied to every claim made by The Threshold itself, including in this document.

User	How they access it	What they get
Expert simulation participants	Full access throughout the 24-month simulation	Evidence foundation for all Scoring Rounds, scenario assessments, and formal statements
Citizen Spotters (the app)	Via the app Knowledge Base search	Context for their own submissions; how their evidence fits the wider picture
Schools and students	Via the Guided Knowledge Layer: age-filtered, classroom-safe	Downloadable Evidence Briefs; structured evidence for critical thinking curriculum
Journalists and investigators	Via the public Knowledge Base with Fact/Opinion audit trail	Citable, graded evidence with full provenance, legally defensible and institutionally endorsed
Academic researchers	Via structured data feeds for institutional partners (Phase 3)	The largest structured citizen science dataset on plastic pollution ever assembled
Policymakers and legislators	Via published policy briefs and the white paper	Ranked intervention list with expert consensus scores; evidence graded A-F
Legal teams and litigators	Via the litigation evidence pipeline (opt-in, Phase 3)	Verified, trust-weighted, convergence-scored evidence with full chain of custody
Medical professionals	Via the Global Medical Declaration evidence base	Scientific foundation for the named professional declaration on plastic and human health
City governments	Via the plastic cost audit methodology	Standardised framework for quantifying plastic externalities, legally usable in liability contexts

User	How they access it	What they get
Institutional investors	Via The Poll Level F evidence summaries	Structured evidence for formal producer liability disclosure requests

"The Knowledge Base is what makes The Threshold different from everything that has come before. It turns dispersed observation into structured intelligence. It is the difference between noise and signal, and it belongs to no one except the evidence itself."

Section 9

Initiative governance:

the Independence Charter

The Threshold cannot be sold, pivoted, or influenced. Its independence is not a promise. It is a legally binding structural commitment.

A platform whose outputs may enter legal proceedings, whose evidence is cited in parliamentary briefings, and whose expert findings are used to argue for binding regulation cannot afford to be commercially compromised. Its credibility is its primary asset. Credibility requires independence.

THE THRESHOLD INDEPENDENCE CHARTER

The Threshold is constituted as a permanent independent initiative. Its mission is legally binding and cannot be altered by any funder, commercial interest, or political body. The following principles are non-negotiable.

1. No funder influence: No funder receives any influence over findings, participant selection, or outputs at any level.

2. Evidence governs conclusions: All conclusions belong to the evidence. If evidence contradicts a funder's position, it is published unchanged.

3. Permanent mission: The programme cannot be sold, pivoted, or discontinued without governance board approval.

4. Public correction: All errors are corrected publicly and completely within 72 hours, never quietly deleted.

5. Youth co-governance: The Youth Council operates with equal process. Nothing affecting future generations is decided without Youth Council input.

The Governance Board

The Governance Board comprises five to seven members with expertise spanning environmental law, independent journalism, academic research, civil society, child protection, and science. None are funders. None represent commercial interests. The board meets quarterly. It must approve any change to the programme's core methodology, mission statement, or evidence standards. Annual financial statements are published in full.

What independence means for every contributor

- Users retain copyright over their submissions. The platform holds only a usage licence.

- Reliability Index scores cannot be reset arbitrarily or commercially influenced.
- Evidence cannot be sold or transferred to any commercial interest.
- If the Lead Architect departs, a published succession protocol governs continuation.
- No funder receives influence over findings at any investment level, ever.

Contributor anonymity: architecturally guaranteed

The Threshold does not know who its Spotters are. This is not a privacy preference or a terms-of-service commitment. It is a technical architecture. The programme holds a cryptographic identifier generated on the contributor's device, never a name, address, or any information that would allow a third party to identify a contributor from their submissions. IP addresses are stripped from all server logs before storage. The programme cannot produce what it does not hold, including in response to a court order.

If a Spotter is targeted with legal action as a result of a submission, a SLAPP suit designed to suppress evidence rather than contest its accuracy, the programme maintains a pre-funded legal defence arrangement. Contributors are not left alone to face industrial legal resources. That commitment is structural, not discretionary.

Section 10

The Youth Council: nothing about them, without them

The client of this programme is the generations who will live with its consequences. Nothing about them is decided without them.

The Threshold Youth Council runs in parallel with the Althing Round simulation, not as a symbolic addition, but with identical protocol, identical tools, and identical analytical rigour. Youth participants aged 18 to 30, selected through the same transparent process as adult experts, engage in their own Scoring Rounds, scenario analysis, and Statement System. Their ranked findings are published alongside, not subordinate to, the adult expert findings.

A note on age. For legal reasons, participant consent, contractual obligations, and the potential that programme outputs enter legal proceedings, the minimum age to serve as a Youth Council participant is 18 years. Young people under 18 are fully engaged through the Schools and Youth layer of the public app, through supervised class submissions, and through the Guided Knowledge Layer.

Where youth and adult rankings agree, the agreement is compelling. Where they diverge, the divergence is the most important analytical finding the programme produces. It is published, explained, and given to policymakers as signal, never averaged away.

Feature	Youth Council specification
Minimum age	18 years. Required for legal consent, contractual obligations, and protection of legal defensibility of programme outputs.
Participants	12 young adults aged 18–30, selected by transparent criteria across diverse geographies and lived experience of the plastic crisis.
Process	Identical Scoring Rounds, scenario analysis, Statement System, and Knowledge Base access as the adult Althing Round. No simplified version. Equal rigour.
Divergence protocol	Where youth and adult rankings diverge, divergence is treated as the most analytically important finding: published, explained, and presented to policymakers as signal.

Feature	Youth Council specification
Governance board	At least one Youth Council representative sits as a non-voting observer with the formal right to record dissent on any governance decision.

"Nothing about them, without them. The generations who will live with the consequences of our decisions have the right, not merely the opportunity, to co-govern the programme that exists to change those decisions."

Section 11

Budget, timeline and the urgency of the moment

What it costs, how long it takes, and why the window for acting at this cost will not remain open.

€1.26M	€1.16M	€2.42M	1.2M+	€280k/yr
Expert simulation 24-month budget	Public app 24-month budget	Total programme investment required	Target app users by month 24	Founding Circle revenue at target

The programme has two parallel budgets, the expert simulation and the public application, which run simultaneously over 24 months. Neither is optional. The simulation without the app produces findings without a constituency. The app without the simulation produces public engagement without an authoritative analytical framework.

The three converging forces: why now

The market signal. Global conflict disrupting major shipping routes from early 2026 caused virgin plastic prices to surge 40–42%. For the first time in three years, recycled plastic is price-competitive. This window will close when shipping normalises, probably by mid-2027.

The health science. The scientific community is within one or two large-scale studies of establishing a direct causal link between microplastic exposure and specific diseases. When that link is firmly established, the regulatory and litigation consequences will accelerate at a speed that will overwhelm any unprepared evidence infrastructure.

The generational shift. The generation now aged 18–25 are entering political life with measurable plastic loads present in their bodies before birth. They are the most politically engaged generation on environmental questions in recorded history.

THE COST OF WAITING: CUMULATIVE INACTION (OECD BUSINESS-AS-USUAL PROJECTIONS)

- 12 months of inaction: +22Mt to environment · estimated reversal cost: €30–50Bn
- 2 years of inaction: +44Mt to environment · estimated cost: €80–120Bn
- 5 years of inaction: +110Mt to environment · estimated cost: €300–500Bn
- 10 years of inaction: +220Mt to environment · estimated cost: €1–2 Trillion

Rebuilding recycling capacity in 2036 costs 3–5× more than protecting it in 2026.

Section 12

The call to action: join The Threshold

Nobody can say with certainty exactly what tomorrow holds. That is not the point.

The direction of the current trajectory, absent structural change, is documented, measured, published, and confirmed by independent scientific and economic bodies. The ranges and projections carry genuine uncertainty. What they share is a direction: without intervention, things get worse. The rate at which they get worse can be debated. The direction, however, is strongly supported by the weight of current evidence.

> *"The plastic crisis is not unsolvable. It is unsolved, because those who benefit from the current system have more organised power than those who are harmed by it. The Threshold is a systematic effort to reverse that imbalance using the one resource that cannot be lobbied away: the number of people who are already angry, and who need a structure that turns their anger into something courts and governments cannot ignore."*

JOIN THE THRESHOLD

The Threshold exists because the evidence demands action and action requires a structure that makes concern legally unignorable.

You do not need a scientific background. You do not need to be an expert. You need five minutes and the willingness to be part of something that matters.

Download the app. Submit what you see. Build your Reliability Index.

Join the Founding Circle. Write to your representative.

If you are a doctor, sign the medical declaration.

If you run a city, commission a cost audit.

If you manage institutional money, request producer liability disclosure.

The evidence is building. The constituency is forming. The only thing missing is you.

Six ways to take part: from two minutes to institutional commitment

Level	For	What it does	Time
A Sign	Everyone	Your name on the programme's public evidence record	2 minutes
B Write	Everyone	The app writes a personalised letter to your elected representative. You send it.	5 minutes
C Declare	Medical and health professionals	Named co-signatory on the Global Medical Declaration on Plastic and Human Health	10 minutes
D Audit	Mayors and council officials	Commission a plastic cost audit for your city using the programme's published methodology	1 meeting
E Commit	Retail and procurement executives	Public tiered commitment to reduce single-use plastic with named accountability	1 meeting

Level	For	What it does	Time
F Disclose	Institutional investors and insurers	Formally request plastic producer liability disclosure from companies in your portfolio	1 letter

What the Threshold holds, it holds for you. What you bring to it, none of us could bring alone.

Contact: Andrew Henderson · Lead Architect · programme@thresholdsummit.org · Marans, France · June 2026

thresholdsummit.org · The Threshold is an independent initiative · Threshold Effect © Andrew Henderson 2026

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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.

In your own words. Write to your unborn grandchildren.

Tell them what you knew, particularly about the consequences of plastic and when you knew. What you did, and what you did not do. What you felt and what you hope, in spite of everything, they will inherit.

Seal it with your mark. It will be held in the Threshold Knowledge Base, protected and permanent, until the threshold is crossed, or until the year you choose to have it opened and by whom.

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.

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