

Plastic Reduction Initiative

Spring 2023

Single-use plastic is a local, national, and global issue

A study published in the journal *Nature Sustainability*, analyzed 12 million pieces of litter collected from oceans and rivers, shorelines, the sea floor, and open waters. **Researchers found that 80% of items were plastic, and nearly half (44%) was related to takeout materials.** Other items included disposable cutlery.

Estimates are that there will be **more plastic than fish in the oceans by 2050** if our behavior does not change.

Plastic kills 1 million sea birds and over 1 million marine mammals each year and comprises **80% of beach trash** on Cape Cod.

“The economic costs of plastic pollution affecting tourism, fisheries and shipping sectors are estimated to be at least \$8 billion annually.” – 2019 finding

Single-use plastic problem

Takeaway boxes and containers make up a considerable part of municipal solid waste, with nearly 30% of single-use plastic generation as recently as 2018—this percent is projected to be greater given the impact of Covid-19.

Nearly **one-third of single-use plastic greenhouse gas emissions come from takeaway food containers.**

Plastic and Styrofoam takeaway containers are destructive to the environment, filling landfills with their chemicals, including petroleum and natural gas.



The life cycle of single-use plastic adversely impacts human and environmental health from production to consumption to disposal. Specific to **take-out containers**, they are made from heat-resistant, flexible plastic derived from petroleum, the majority continue to contain phthalates and bisphenol-A (BPA). Both have been linked to health issues. At disposal, plastic does not biodegrade.

Plastic affects health and environmental well-being

Plastic is a human and environmental health hazard.

Plastics can contain thousands of possible additives, and manufacturers are not required to disclose what their recipes are. Any plastic can leach, depending on the conditions (light, heat) and what additives it includes. The chemicals in plastic have been tied to cardiovascular disease, reproductive disorders, obesity, and developmental disorders.

Plastic has been found in the air we breathe, the water we drink and the food we eat. Most recently plastic has been found in human blood, in the placenta, and in lung tissue.

Plastic recycling is not a solution

Most single-use plastic is not recycled. The plastics industry rarely uses recycled plastics in the vast majority of their products, unlike the glass and metal industries.

The recycling arrows stamped on plastic products and the cities that collect every type of plastic via their recycling programs, lead people to believe that all plastic products are recyclable and being recycled, and **that's simply not true.** In fact, for the small proportion of plastic that is recycled, it is typically turned into only one other product, which will most likely be landfilled at the end of its life.



PLANET PLASTIC

Proposed by- law

Prohibition

A. Except as provided herein, Food Establishments are prohibited from dispensing Prepared Food to customers in Disposable Food Service containers and utensils made from Plastic.

B. Town Facility Users are prohibited from dispensing Prepared Food to customers in Disposable Food Service containers made from Plastic and providing utensils made from Plastic.

Public and private schools, educational institutions, summer camps, childcare facilities, and other childcare programs approved to participate in USDA Child Nutrition Programs are exempt.

Effective Date

This Bylaw shall take effect on September 1, 2024.

Proposed by- law *(continued)*

Administration and Enforcement

This Bylaw is enforced by the Town Administrator/Manager, or any committee appointed by them. Any Food Establishment or Town Facility User which violates any provision of this Bylaw shall be subject to the following penalties:

- First Offense: Written warning
- 2nd Offense: \$150 fine
- 3rd Offense and Subsequent Offenses: \$300 fine

Any such fines collected shall be payable to the Town of Falmouth. Each day the violation continues constitutes a separate violation. After detection of an initial violation, the designated inspection authority will be required to verify subsequent compliance until compliance with this bylaw is established. All businesses will be routinely inspected until the Town Administrator/Manager deems the inspection to be no longer be required.

Thank you!