



# PLASTIC FREE RESTAURANT INITIATIVE

## The Bottom Line – it's the Final Straw



### For Restaurant Employees

Why we are moving to a “Straws By Request Only” approach (and hopefully, those that are given out will be paper or other truly biodegradable straws, one example here:

<https://www.aardvarkstraws.com/restaurants/>):

1. The restaurant will save significant expense by decreasing plumber visits to unclog drains
2. Expense will also be saved by significantly decreasing the amount spent on purchasing plastic straws (e.g. **Grain** estimates saving the need to purchase more than 1 million straws annually! Although they may not be expensive, that does add up!)
3. EVERY DAY Americans throw away 500 million plastic straws, enough to circle the earth twice or fill 125 school buses every day
4. Single use plastic straws are not recyclable
5. Plastic straws contribute to the 800 tons of plastic which is dumped or washed into the ocean every year. At this rate, there will be more plastic than fish in the ocean by year 2050
6. Plastic trash breaks down into toxic particles and enters our own food chain in the ocean (all drains lead to the ocean)
7. By not using plastic straws, you contribute to saving the lives of marine animals who ingest it
8. “Straws upon request” is a growing movement in restaurants (<http://www.surfrider.org/programs/ocean-friendly-restaurants>) across the globe - let's have Delaware lead the way
9. Even the American Chemistry Council is recommending a Product Stewardship Program for straws, i.e. only using straws upon request
10. Be aware that “bioplastics” that are sold as “compostable” are unregulated and often misleading in their claims. Many “green” plastic products are still just that: plastic made from natural gas and oil which breaks down into toxic particles. It is anticipated that the money saved by distributing less plastic by an Opt-In Only philosophy and truly biodegradable products as needed will more than offset any potential increased cost in compostable or reusable alternatives.

If you own, manage or are employed at a restaurant, bar or food establishment which provides straws by request only, we want to



know so we can promote your sustainability efforts on our web site and social media! Kudos to you! And/or if you would like additional information, please email or call:

[info@bringyourownbag.us](mailto:info@bringyourownbag.us)

302-981-1950

[www.BringYourOwnBag.us](http://www.BringYourOwnBag.us)



## PLASTIC STRAWS SUCK

Americans use 500 MILLION drinking straws every day. Why? We don't generally use them at home. They are typically made of polypropylene which is made from natural gas or oil. As shown below, they are one of the most common items found every year in the Coastal Cleanup, and other watershed cleanups.

Restaurants can save hundreds of dollars each month by switching to paper straws only by request, while also eliminating landfill/disposal costs and reducing environmental impact. Grain Kitchen + Bar estimates it is saving 1.5 MILLION straws from the landfill and environment each year by switching to By Request Only.

## COASTAL CLEANUP STATS FOR DELAWARE

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>TOTAL WASTE COLLECTED OF ALL TYPES</b>	9.6 tons	9.5 tons	10.7 tons	7.8 tons	4 tons	3 tons	7.8 tons	6.1 tons	3.8 tons
<b>Plastic Bags</b>	825	1,224	3,056	1,875	2,296	2,777	2,433	1,014	1,066
<b>Straws</b>	2,445	1,130	4,106	1,895	2,385	2,346	1,657	1,845	1,953
<b>Cig butts</b>	15,876	11,093	9,817	14,478	22,779	18,877	20,410	13,569	16,294
<b>Balloons</b>	1,093	270	636	395	451	1,214	458	676	1,071
<b>Plastic bottles</b>	5,384	1,437	7778	2,688	3,267	3,760	3,785	3,089	2,948

Be wary of "compostable plastic."

- Read the fine print. They are often still just plastic which breaks down more quickly rather than being truly biodegradable. It is often not recyclable and actually contaminates other plastics that are.
- It still poses a health hazard in our oceans to wildlife and humans
- It is not regulated.
- They cannot be composted at home, but rather require industrial facilities with high temperatures.
- Will still likely end up in the landfill for 1,000s of years

See also:

[www.beachapedia.org/bioplastics](http://www.beachapedia.org/bioplastics)

<http://www.surfrider.org/programs/ocean-friendly-restaurants>

<http://www.dnrec.delaware.gov/dwhs/recycling/pages/recycling.aspx>

Paper straw supplier: <https://www.aardvarkstraws.com/restaurants/>



Greenwashing - still plastic in sheep's clothing