

Disposable Plastic Pollution Reduction Bylaw

To see if the Town will vote to amend the General Bylaws by adopting a new bylaw entitled “Disposable Plastic Pollution Reduction Bylaw”:

Section I. Findings and Purpose

Numerous studies have shown that the production and use of disposable plastic items like straws, stirrers, and splash sticks can have significant adverse impacts. Disposable plastic items readily enter the environment, both land and sea, harming wildlife who mistake it for food, ingest it, and die. Especially in the marine environment, plastic persists for hundreds of years and often fragments into microplastics, adsorbs and concentrates environmental toxins, and can enter the food chain when consumed by fish, shellfish, and other organisms, risking both ecosystem health and potentially contaminating the human food supply. Many plastic items are made from fossil fuels, non-renewable resources that contribute to greenhouse gas emissions and anthropogenic climate change.

Plastic straws, stirrers, and splash sticks are not able to be recycled in the Town. Further, many plastics marketed as compostable and biodegradable require the specific conditions in industrial composting facilities to break down consistently and completely, and access to such industrial composting facilities is not yet universally and readily available to residents of the Town.

The substitution of reusable items and/or items made from recyclable, compostable, or biodegradable non-plastic materials are affordable and effective ways to reduce the negative impacts of disposable plastic food service items. Data also shows that ‘only upon request’ policies significantly reduce the overall usage of disposable items, reducing both costs and environmental impacts, without preventing those who need or want a disposable item from obtaining it.

Therefore, the purpose of this bylaw is to protect the Town’s unique beauty, irreplaceable natural resources, and the health of its residents by reducing the use and distribution of disposable plastic straws, stirrers, and splash sticks in the Town of Sudbury, and promoting reusable and non-plastic alternatives.

Section II. Definitions

The following words shall have the following meanings for purpose of this Bylaw:

“Disability” shall mean a physical, intellectual, or sensory impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

“Disposable plastic straw, stirrer, or splash stick” shall mean a drinking straw, stirrer, or splash stick made predominantly from synthetic polymers and that is not a reusable straw, stirrer, or splash stick. A disposable plastic straw, stirrer, or splash stick shall also include items made in whole or in part from synthetic polymers that are otherwise classified as ‘compostable’, ‘biodegradable’, ‘oxodegradable’, or ‘marine degradable’.

“Food Establishment” shall mean any operation that serves, vends or otherwise provides food or other products to third-parties for consumption and/or use on or off the premises, whether or not a fee is charged, but not including the service of food within a home or other private setting. Any facility requiring a food permit in accordance with the Massachusetts State Food Code, 105 CMR 590.000, et seq. and/or regulations of the Board of Health shall be considered a “food establishment” for purposes of this bylaw.

“Health Agent” shall mean the Health Agent for the Sudbury Board of Health or his/her designee.

“Medical Condition” shall mean any illness, disease, or injury that requires medical treatment.

“Reusable straw, stirrer, or splash stick” shall mean a drinking straw, stirrer, or splash stick that is manufactured from durable materials, and is designed to be adequately and repeatedly cleaned and sanitized for reuse.

“Retail Establishment” shall mean a store or premises engaged in the retail business of selling or providing merchandise, goods, groceries, prepared take-out food and beverages for consumption off-premises or the serving of an item, directly to customers at such store or premises, including, but not limited to, grocery stores, department stores, clothing stores, pharmacies, convenience stores, restaurants, coffee shops and seasonal and temporary businesses, including farmers markets and public markets; provided, however, that a “retail establishment” shall also include a food truck or other motor vehicle, mobile canteen, trailer, market pushcart or moveable roadside stand used by a person from which to engage in such business directly with customers and business establishments without a storefront, including, but not limited to, a business delivering prepared foods or other food items, web-based or catalog business or delivery services used by a retail establishment; provided further, that a “retail establishment” shall include a non-profit organization, charity or religious institution that has a retail establishment and holds itself out to the public as engaging in retail activities that are characteristic of similar type commercial retail businesses, whether or not for profit when engaging in such activity.

Section III. Regulated Conduct

- a. After February 1, 2021, no food establishment in the Town of Sudbury may provide a disposable plastic straw, stirrer, or splash stick, as such term is defined in this Bylaw, to a customer.
- b. After February 1, 2021, no food establishment in the Town of Sudbury may provide a disposable straw, stirrer, or splash stick that is not a reusable straw, stirrer, or splash stick to a customer, except upon that customer’s specific request for such items or if the item is selected by a customer from a self-service dispenser.
- c. After February 1, 2021, retail establishments in the Town of Sudbury are prohibited from selling or distributing disposable plastic straws, stirrers, or splash sticks to customers unless equivalent non-plastic or reusable straws, stirrers, or splash sticks are available for sale and are clearly labeled such that any customer can easily distinguish among the disposable plastic, disposable non-plastic, and reusable items.

Section IV. Exemptions

- a. Nothing in this bylaw shall prohibit individuals from bringing and using their own personal straws, stirrers, or splash sticks of any type for personal use in a food establishment.
- b. Food establishments may provide a disposable plastic straw, stirrer, or splash stick, upon request, to a person in need due to a disability or medical condition.
- c. The Board of Health or health agent may exempt a food establishment or retail establishment from any provision of this Bylaw for a period of up to six months upon written application by the owner or operator of that establishment. No exemption will be granted unless the Board of Health or health agent finds that the establishment

requires additional time in order to draw down an existing inventory of a specific item regulated by this Bylaw.

Section V. Enforcement

Health Agents shall have the authority to enforce this bylaw. This bylaw may be enforced through any lawful means in law or in equity, including but not limited to, noncriminal disposition pursuant to G.L. c. 40 § 21D and Article VI of the General Bylaws. The Town may enforce this Bylaw or enjoin violations thereof through any lawful process or combination of processes, and the election of one remedy by the Town shall not preclude enforcement through any other lawful means.

Violations of this bylaw are punishable by a fine of up to \$300 per violation. Each successive day of noncompliance will count as a separate violation.

If non-criminal disposition is elected, then any Food Establishment or Retail Establishment that violates any provision of this bylaw shall be subject to the following penalties:

First Offense: Written Warning

Second Offense: \$50 penalty

Third and each subsequent offense: \$300 penalty

Section VI. Regulations

The Board of Health may adopt and amend rules and regulations to effectuate the purposes of this Bylaw.

Section VII. Interaction with Other Laws

In the case of a conflict between the requirements of this Bylaw and any other federal, state or local law concerning the materials regulated herein, the more stringent requirements shall apply.

Section VIII. Severability

If any provision of this Bylaw is declared invalid or unenforceable the other provisions shall not be affected thereby;

And further, to authorize the Town Clerk to assign such numbering as is appropriate to said bylaw in conformance with the existing codification of the Town's Bylaws; Or take any action relative thereto.