

Plastic Reduction Ordinance Summary

Programs & Services Committee, City of Newton

March 22, 2023

Alan Gordon

- Plastic Reduction Working Group
- Sustainable Materials Management Commission
- Green Newton



Newton Plastic Reduction

- Group formed over a year ago by Councilor Vicki Danberg
- “Plastic Reduction Working Group”
- Includes members of Green Newton, the Sustainable Materials Management Commission, students, and other residents interested in reducing single use plastic
- Explored options for reductions in single use plastic
- Spoke with residents and local governments officials from Cambridge, Brookline, Concord, Arlington (and Newton, of course)
- Spoke with individuals from Clover, Black Earth Compost, Recircable, Go Box (reusable provider in Portland, OR)
- Presented to the Restaurant Committee of the Charles River Chamber

Recycling Limits

- Many items such as black plastic and waxed/coated takeout containers are not recyclable.
- Recyclable alternatives exist
- MA Recycling Works website has numerous resources: <https://recyclingworksma.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Reducing-Waste-from-Restaurant-Takeout-and-Delivery-Meals.pdf>
- Certified (BPI, CMA, OKCompost) compostable containers are a good choice if you use an organics pickup service such as Black Earth
- Reusables are preferred



Result

- Expanded the 2019 Sustainable Packaging ordinance to include prohibitions on additional single use plastic items
- Docketed by Councilor Danberg

Existing Ordinance – passed April 16, 2019

Sustainable Food Containers and Packaging Ordinance

- Food establishments are prohibited from dispensing prepared food or beverages to any person in disposable food containers made from foam polystyrene.
- Food establishments are prohibited from dispensing plastic stirrers.
- All food establishments are strongly encouraged to use reusable food service ware in place of using disposable food service ware for all food served on the premises. Food establishments using any disposable food service ware and stirrers are strongly encouraged to use biodegradable, compostable, reusable or recyclable food service ware and stirrers.
- Retail establishments are prohibited from selling or distributing disposable food containers made from foam polystyrene to customers.
- Retail establishments are prohibited from selling or distributing polystyrene foam packing material to customers.

New ordinance

Sustainable Food Service Ware, Packaging, and Single Use Items

- No dispensing food that is prepared on site in food service containers that are not reusable, compostable, or recyclable.
- Plastic stirrers are prohibited. (no change from existing ordinance).
- Automatic inclusion of plastic utensils, including forks, knives, spoons, straws, etc. to takeout customers is prohibited. Utensils may be provided if expressly requested by the customer.
- No single use condiment packages unless expressly requested.
- No single use water bottles.
- No plastic balloon sticks, plastic floss sticks, plastic ear swabs, and cosmetics containing plastic glitter.

New ordinance, continued

Sustainable Food Service Ware, Packaging, and Single Use Items

- No intentional release of helium balloons.
- No retail sale of food containers and packing materials that are not reusable, compostable, or recyclable.
- Customers may bring and fill themselves their own containers for leftovers from dine-in.
- Require reusable dishware and utensils for dine-in customers.
- Require restaurants to offer an option for reusable takeout containers.

Around Massachusetts

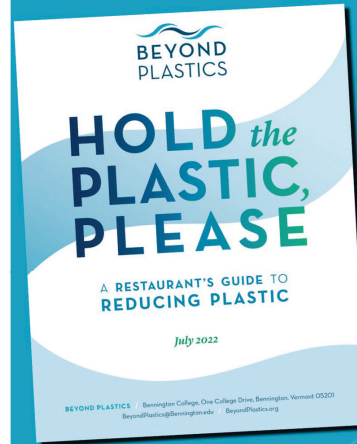
Examples of municipalities in Massachusetts that with single use plastic bans

- Food service items must be recyclable or compostable (no black plastic!)
 - Andover, Brookline, Concord, Manchester-by-the-Sea, Northampton, and Williamstown
- Banned single use plastic water bottles (retail and/or municipal)
 - Aquinnah, Arlington, Bourne, Brewster, Brookline, Chatham, Chilmark, Concord, Eastham, Falmouth, Great Barrington, Harwich, Lincoln, Nantucket, Oak Bluffs, Orleans, Provincetown, Rockport, Sudbury, Tisbury, Truro, Wellfleet, West Tisbury, and Yarmouth
- Banned plastic straws (may be incomplete)
 - Lincoln, Lexington, Attleboro, Buckland, Chelmsford, Essex, Gloucester, Harwich, Nantucket, Provincetown, Rockport and Swampscott
- Balloon releases are banned in (may be incomplete)
 - Chatham, Everett, Nantucket, and Provincetown
- Other single use plastic items such as plastic balloon sticks, plastic ear swabs, etc
 - Brookline, Nantucket (including flushable wipes)

Help is available

- Beyond Plastics is an organization that provides assistance and a free guide
- <https://www.dinegreen.com/green-my-restaurant> - green certification attracts environmentally conscious customers
- Plastic Free Restaurants provides funding to purchase reusable dishware - <https://www.plasticfreerestaurants.org/subsidy>
- Rethink Disposables: <http://www.rethinkdisposable.org/>
- Reusable container
 - Recirclable: <https://www.recirclable.com/>
 - Usefull: <https://www.usefull.us/>

RESTAURANTS CAN BREAK FREE FROM PLASTIC!



This free guide makes it easy for restaurants to reduce their use of plastic, attract new customers, increase diner satisfaction, and protect the planet.

Get the guide: beyondplastics.org/restaurant-guide

Discussion and Questions

Q & A