



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CONTACT:
Paul Brenck at 619-533-4508 or pbrenck@sandiego.gov

City of San Diego Polystyrene Foam and Single Use Plastics Ordinance Takes Effect Feb. 23

PHASED ROLL OUT SEEKS TO REDUCE POLLUTION, IMPROVE WATER QUALITY AND PRESERVE ENVIRONMENT

SAN DIEGO – In an effort to create a cleaner, healthier environment and help achieve Zero Waste goals, the first provisions of the City of San Diego’s [Polystyrene Foam and Single Use Plastics Ordinance](#) go into effect Saturday, Feb. 23, 2019. The ordinance will be rolled out in phases to allow businesses and other entities time to implement changes with the overall goal of reducing the use of polystyrene foam and single use plastics Citywide.

As part of the initial phase, food vendors within city limits will no longer be permitted to distribute plastic or bioplastic utensils or straws unless requested by the customer. Additionally, all food service ware, coolers, ice chests and pool or beach toys made from polystyrene foam will be prohibited at City facilities (including special events).

Coolers, ice chests and similar containers; pool and beach toys; and dock floats, mooring buoys, and anchor or navigation markers made from polystyrene foam will no longer be legally sold or distributed in the City unless they are fully encased in another material.

“The Polystyrene Foam and Single Use Plastic Ordinance will help San Diego reach its Zero Waste goals and preserve our beautiful beaches and other public spaces,” said the City’s Environmental Services Department Director, Mario X. Sierra. “The City is working with local businesses and organizations to minimize impacts and make the transition to safe, environmentally friendly materials.”

The next phase of the ordinance goes into effect on May 24, 2019 with a ban on the sale and distribution of egg cartons, food service ware and food trays made in whole or in part from polystyrene foam. This provision includes bowls, plates, trays, cups, lids and other similar items designed for one-time use for prepared foods, including containers for dine-in, takeout food and leftovers.

Acceptable alternatives that will be allowed under the ordinance include recyclable plastics, aluminum and both recyclable and non-recyclable paper products. Compostable plastics or other products like sugarcane or a sugar cane byproduct material known as bagasse are not acceptable alternatives due to possible contamination of the recycling and yard waste streams by those products.

The ordinance is designed to reduce the amount of single use plastics and polystyrene entering San Diego's environment and waterways. Polystyrene foam products are typically used once before being discarded. These products can easily be improperly discarded due to their light weight, littering neighborhoods and impacting water quality. Polystyrene foam products are also hazardous to animals and marine life.

Plastic straws are also a significant contributor to marine pollution and are among the most common forms of litter collected on California beaches.

Business entities with a gross annual income of less than \$500,000 on their most recent federal income tax filing are exempt from the ordinance requirements until Feb. 23, 2020. Waivers are available to address financial or feasibility hardships, or if an entity has certain contractual requirements to purchase newly prohibited items.

Visit the Environmental Services Department's web page for specific information about the new ordinance at www.sandiego.gov/pf-ban.

The Environmental Services Department provides local businesses with assistance in developing waste reduction and recycling programs with a free comprehensive waste analysis. For more information about Environmental Services' programs, call 858-694-7000, or visit www.recyclingworks.com.



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