New Ordinances Addressing Single-Use Plastics

The City recently passed two new ordinances to reduce the amount of litter and waste produced by single-use plastic. Due to China’s major recycling policy changes on what they accept, the country is now left with a plastic problem with no alternative buyers.

As litter, plastics are also highly persistent in the environment. This has huge impacts on water quality, marine food systems, and the health of humans and wildlife.

In the interest of protecting Watsonville’s environment, its economy, and the health of its residents, these two new ordinances prohibit single-use disposable plastics in the food service and hospitality industry, requiring compostable and refillable options instead. The changes will be rolled out over the next year. City staff will work with the business community to help make the transition smooth and reasonable.

Hospitality Ordinance

January 1, 2020

- Prohibited distribution of small (less than 12 ounces) plastic bottles of personal care products, unless requested specifically for disability or other special need.
- Required bulk dispensers of personal care products.

Product, Packaging and Foodware Ordinance

August 8, 2019

- Prohibited sales and use of plastic foam (Styrofoam) products. This includes food service ware, as well as coolers, containers, ice chests, shipping boxes, pool or beach toys, packing peanuts or other packaging materials, etc.

January 1, 2020

- Prohibited distribution of plastic straws, unless specifically requested. Straws must be compostable and non-PLA (polylactic acid).
- $0.10 customer charge for single-use cups to encourage reusable cups and bottles. Customers with EBT and WIC cards are exempt of charge.

January 1, 2021

- All foodware required to be compostable (as defined by ASTM standards).
- Self-bussing food service vendors must provide three color-coded bins clearly labeled for compostables (green), recyclables (blue), and garbage (black).
Prevent sewer backups in your business with two easy steps:

1. Remove food containing Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG) from dishes before washing.
2. Scrape your FOG into a covered container and throw it in the garbage.

These materials can harden in your pipes causing blockages and requiring expensive maintenance and repair costs!

#PlasticFreeWatsonville

The City has launched a “Plastic Free” campaign challenging residents to reduce and refuse single-use plastic products. This is part of a global movement addressing the issues created by plastic pollution. Through this campaign, Watsonville residents are learning about the “true cost of plastic” and encouraged to choose reusable options, such as water bottles, coffee mugs, shopping and produce bags. These efforts help keep litter off the streets and from entering storm drains and waterways. Additionally, choosing reusable options over single-use plastic products helps reduces carbon emissions that contribute to climate change.

Keep Your Drains Fat Free

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