

Straws-Upon-Request Law

In an effort to mitigate plastic pollution and reduce the amount of single-use plastic, California lawmakers recently passed Assembly Bill (AB) 1884, which bans full-service restaurants from offering single-use plastic straws unless requested by the customer. The law, which will take effect January 1, 2019, calls for fines on establishments beginning with the third violation.

Background

The World Economic Forum reports that there are over 150 million metric tons of plastics in the ocean, and the problem is getting worse. Small items like straws and other single-use plastics are not easily recyclable and therefore end up in landfills, waterways, and oceans.

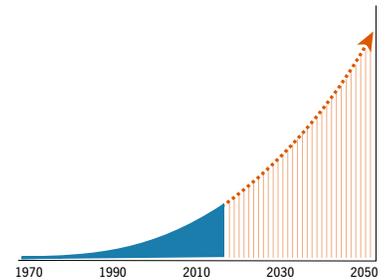
Why now?

This measure reflects a larger trend across the country to ban single-use plastic goods to reduce ocean pollution. Some restaurants in Alameda County have already voluntarily instituted this practice and others have switched to compostable paper straws. A handful of cities in the county have already adopted policies regulating plastic straw usage.

While straws themselves are not a significant component of plastic pollution in the ocean, proponents of AB 1884 hope that straws can serve as a “gateway plastic,” encouraging people to forgo other single-use plastics such as bags and bottles, and helping to increase awareness about the environmental impacts of single-use plastics.



Plastics products account for **THE TOP 10 ITEMS COLLECTED** during the Ocean Conservancy's International Cleanup event.



Plastic production is predicted to **DOUBLE IN THE NEXT 20 YEARS AND QUADRUPLE BY 2050.**

Voluntary Actions Businesses Can Take Now:



Eliminate Plastic Service Ware

Convert disposable cutlery and food service ware to reusables when possible. “**ReThink Disposable**” is a free program that encourages food service businesses like restaurants, caterers, mobile food vendors, and institutional kitchens to minimize disposable product usage. In collaboration with ReThink Disposable, StopWaste offers rebates to businesses to use toward the purchase of reusable food service ware.



Incentivize Customers to Reuse

Post a sign up to encourage customers to bring their own reusable containers and cups for takeout. Provide a monetary incentive for those who do.



Encourage Proper Disposal

Reduce contamination in the recycling and compost streams by providing clear instructions for customers. The most effective signage uses images of the actual food ware packaging items above their corresponding bin.