



DATE: May 9, 2019

TO: Programs and Administration Committee
Planning Committee/Recycling Board

FROM: Anu Natarajan, Legislative and Regulatory Affairs Manager

SUBJECT: Background for Single-Use Disposable Food Service Ware Ordinance

SUMMARY

At the May 9, 2019 Programs & Administration Committee and Planning Committee/Recycling Board meetings, staff will provide an overview of environmental issues associated with different types of food service ware (plates, bowls, cutlery and beverage containers), with a particular focus on “compostable” food ware. The information is background as staff begins preparations for development of a model single-use disposable service ware ordinance and associated environmental documentation.

DISCUSSION

During the priority setting discussions, the Board stressed the importance of addressing plastic pollution. In addition to working with the State legislature on these issues, there was interest in developing a model single-use disposable food service ware ordinance to address this countywide. As a first step, we need to review and understand the implications of the different food service ware options available. Our intention is to get a better understanding of the complexities of this issue in order to minimize the likelihood of any unintended consequences of ordinance requirements.

The discussion at the meeting will focus on the primary types of food service ware (see attachment) in addition to other factors such as acceptable alternatives, current and future processing capacity, and lifecycle impacts of reusable food ware.

An initial discussion with member agency staff, who will be part of an ongoing working group, was held on May 2 to solicit their input. Staff will elaborate on these issues at the meetings, and provide a summary of actions we will take in preparation of a model single-use food service ware ordinance.

RECOMMENDATION

This item is for information only.

Attachment A: Types of Food Service Ware

ATTACHMENT A

Single-Use Disposable Food Service Ware Product Types

Product type	Advantages	Disadvantages	Criteria/Standard Alignment
Unlined/uncoated paper/fiber products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easy to understand for consumers and businesses Paper and wood readily acceptable at compost facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper may not perform in every food application i.e.; hot food, paper clamshells, soup bowls, etc. Unlined products may have moisture barriers and other undisclosed additives like PFC's Usually not labeled or certified Allowable under OMRI/NOPs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BPI does not certify unlined paper products. ASTM if labeled "compostable"
Non-compostable poly-coated paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Readily available Lower cost point May help collect organics Other products like milk cartons, coffee cups, etc. have been promoted as compostable for many years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May generate microplastics in finished compost and need screening in composting Not allowable under OMRI/NOPs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No rating/certification program
PLA-coated paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better performance in hot applications compared to unlined paper 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not many options for products Not allowable under OMRI/NOPs PLA can become contaminant in finished compost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BPI certified ASTM 6400 if labeled "compostable"
Plastic (1-7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Readily available to businesses in a variety of products Often accepted for recycling at curbside and commercial programs Wide range of products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May not be accepted at facilities if there's food contamination Consumer concern about hot food and plastic Can become contaminates in organics stream 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ASTM 6400 if labeled "compostable"
Compostable plastics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easy two bin sorting for customers Facilitates capture of more organics Range of products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of labeling Confusing claims, "biodegradable" Processors and composters don't want CP's Even some certified products do not break down depending on composting process Not allowable OMRI/NOPs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BPI certified ASTM 6400 if labeled "compostable"
Wood products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Readily acceptable at compost facilities Limited product choices (mostly flatware) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expensive Performance issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ASTM 6400 if labeled "compostable"

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