

# PLASTIC REDUCTION LAW

## Howard County Bill No 13-2021

went into effect on January 1, 2022 to reduce the use of disposable plastic.

The law encourages use of *alternatives to plastic*—ones that are marketed as reusable, paper, or compostable\*.

\*Home and Commercially Compostable items labeled BPI or ASTM D6400 are allowed.



## What is the law?

Certain plastic single-use

- drinking straws,
  - beverage stirrers,
  - condiment packets, and
  - food ware (plastic utensils, containers and lids)
- can no longer be distributed where food is served to the public in Howard County *unless requested by the consumer*.



Paper, home compostable, and reusable items are permitted.

Plastic utensils, condiments, straws and stirrers should not be automatically included in delivery, pick-up, and online orders, but can be requested.

Retail businesses cannot sell or distribute single use plastic straws or stirrers unless paper or reusable straws or stirrers are also available for purchase in the same location.

Every year, 6 million tons of nondurable plastics, like spoons, forks, and knives, are discarded.

It is unclear if/when plastic ever decomposes.

Only 9% of plastics have ever been recycled.

## Alternatives to Plastic



## Examples of "reusable"

Items that are washable, dishwasher safe and/or microwavable



The law specifics can get tricky. And of course, exceptions exist: for health care facilities, self service areas of food establishments, staff asking customers if they want the plastic items. For more information, guidance, and details, scan:



And remember that polystyrene (commonly known as Styrofoam™) food service products were banned by the State of Maryland.

**When you encounter businesses that are following the rules, thank them for being good citizens!**

**If you encounter businesses that aren't following the rules, give them a copy of this flyer**

**Let's educate!**



Please email questions to [reduceplastic@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:reduceplastic@howardcountymd.gov) or call the Office of Community Sustainability at 410-313-0700.