Rolling Out Maryland’s Foam Ban

Maryland Chapter Zero Waste Team
July 15, 2020
Why ban foam food containers?

• Used for minutes, they break into small pieces that last forever
• Harm to wildlife and the environment
• Growing harm to human health
• Not recyclable, not biodegradable
• Take up space in landfills
• There are plenty of alternatives that are less harmful
What's in the state-wide foam ban? (1)

What's banned?

• Sale of expanded polystyrene food service products in the State (as of July 1, 2020)
• Sale or provision of food or beverages in an expanded polystyrene food service product by a food service business or school (as of October 1, 2020)

What is a food service business?

• A business that sells or provides food or beverages for consumption on or off the premises
• It includes a business or institutional cafeteria, including those operated by or on behalf of state or local government
What's in the state-wide foam ban? (2)

What is an expanded polystyrene food service product?

• A product made of expanded polystyrene used for selling or providing food or beverages and
• Intended by the manufacturer to be used once, for eating or drinking, or recognized by the public as an item to be discarded after one use.
• Includes: food containers, plates, hot and cold beverage cups, trays, and cartons for eggs or other food.

What is exempted?

• Food or beverages that have been packaged in expanded polystyrene containers before receipt by a food service business
• A product made of expanded polystyrene used to package raw, uncooked, or butchered meat, fish, poultry, or seafood
• Non-foam polystyrene products
What's in the state-wide foam ban? (3)

Who publicizes and enforces the ban?
- MDE - public education and outreach campaign before and during implementation, including:
  - Contact with food service businesses, in consultation with relevant units of county government and trade organizations
  - Contact with schools, in consultation with MD Dept of Education
  - Distribution of information by internet and web-based resources
  - News releases and news events
- A unit of county government enforces, including a local health or environment department

What's the penalty?
- Written notice of violation and 3 months to correct it
- Up to $250 per violation
- MDE to be notified of any violation
Compliance is high when businesses are aware!

Prince George's County

Compliance rose to over 90% after face-to-face education of businesses by Sierra Club volunteers.

Source: Prince George's Sierra Club monitoring of 465 businesses in 45 shopping centers, 2017 (symbols are shopping centers)
Montgomery County

Compliance by Montgomery County businesses and those in Gaithersburg is about 90% at first visit, though pharmacies are less aware.

Source: Montgomery County Sierra Club monitoring of 328 businesses in 38 shopping centers, Jan-Feb 2018 (symbols are shopping centers)

* As of February 14, 2018
Thank you!

For more information:

MDE Foam Ban Website
https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/LAND/RecyclingandOperationsprogram/Pages/Expanded-Polystyrene-Food-Service-Products-Ban.aspx

John Sullivan's email: John.sullivan1@maryland.gov

Sierra Club Zero Waste Website
(where materials will be posted)
www.sierraclub.org/maryland/zero-waste

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