



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, March 21, 2023

City of San Diego's Ban on Polystyrene Foam Products Takes Effect April 1

REGULATION SUPPORTS CLIMATE ACTION PLAN, PROTECTS WATERWAYS AND ENVIRONMENT

SAN DIEGO – Effective April 1, 2023, most polystyrene foam products will be prohibited from being sold or distributed in the City of San Diego. The [San Diego Single Use Plastic Reduction Ordinance](#) supports the City's zero-waste goals and will help reduce the number of plastics entering San Diego's environment, waterways and the landfill.

"Polystyrene foam is a common source of litter that has lasting negative impacts in our communities, beaches and beyond," said Environmental Services Director Renee Robertson. "It does not biodegrade, but instead breaks into small pieces, blows in the wind and floats on water, where it can be ingested by birds, fish and other animals."

In line with the City's landmark [2022 Climate Action Plan](#), the ordinance will prohibit businesses from selling and distributing food service ware, egg cartons and food trays made in whole or in part from polystyrene foam. This includes bowls, plates, trays, cups, lids and other similar items designed for one-time use for prepared foods, including containers for dine-in, takeout food and leftovers. In addition to food containers, the ordinance will include coolers, beach toys and other polystyrene foam items that are difficult to recycle.

Many businesses have already moved away from using polystyrene foam. For those that have not made the switch, the City is committed to providing information and technical assistance. The City is taking an education-first approach, and there will be multiple opportunities for compliance before enforcement.

The ordinance will also require customers to request single-use plastics, such as utensils or straws, instead of receiving them with every food order, thereby reducing unnecessary distribution. Businesses will be able to offer these items at self-service stations. The ordinance also prohibits the use of polystyrene products on City property, including at parks and beaches.

Waivers are available for feasibility-based hardships, financial hardships and contractual requirements. There is an automatic waiver through March 31, 2024, for entities with gross income less than \$500,000 on their most recent federal income tax filing. Those businesses interested in applying for a waiver can

email sdrecyclingworks@sandiego.gov.

Businesses looking for additional information about the ordinance are invited to visit the City's [website](http://sandiego.gov/pf-ban) (sandiego.gov/pf-ban), which has a number of resources, including alternatives to polystyrene, a recording of an informational webinar and downloadable/printable materials that can be posted in restaurants to notify customers.

San Diego joins more than 130 California cities that have passed similar ordinances restricting polystyrene foam. The City's efforts complement recent [state legislation](#) to promote the recyclability of single-use products and reduce distribution of utensils and condiment packets that are quickly discarded and sent to landfills.

###