

## Communication from Public

**Name:**

**Date Submitted:** 11/28/2021 12:25 PM

**Council File No:** 21-0064

**Comments for Public Posting:** I urge SUPPORT of Council File 21-0064, for continued reduction of plastic waste and move to zero waste. Thank you.

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Rebecca Gundzik

**Date Submitted:** 11/29/2021 09:07 AM

**Council File No:** 21-0064

**Comments for Public Posting:** I support this motion to reduce and eventually eliminate plastic waste. We consume plastic, yet it does not breakdown and will remain as trash for thousands of years. We are drowning in plastic, it's getting into the sea life and our food sources. We need to make this happen soon.

## Communication from Public

**Name:** David Juarez  
**Date Submitted:** 11/30/2021 03:22 PM  
**Council File No:** 21-0064  
**Comments for Public Posting:** Please see letter attached.



November 30, 2021

Energy, Climate Change, Environmental Justice, and River Committee  
Los Angeles City Hall  
200 N Spring St,  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

**RE: Report from Bureau of Sanitation on the Reduction of Single-Use Plastics**

Dear Committee Members,

On behalf of the California Restaurant Association (CRA), and the thousands of restaurants in the city of Los Angeles, I am writing to express our strong opposition to various recommendations outlined by the Bureau of Sanitation on their report dated 11/22/21, which looks to ban the use of polystyrene foodservice packaging, single-use plastic foodservice products, and to mandate reusable service ware in all food service facilities in the City of Los Angeles.

As an industry that shares the ongoing concern over litter by routinely partnering on litter abatement efforts at the state and local levels, the restaurant community is also concerned about overburdening landfills and has engaged in public policy to encourage recycling and reduce food waste. Comprehensive efforts should be aimed at reducing all composition of material in the landfills. The CRA has maintained a longstanding history of supporting and advocating for packaging mandates that require all food packaging materials to be recyclable or compostable.

Over the past 20 months the restaurant community has been devastated by the government ordered pandemic shutdowns and operational limitations- many of which continue today. As a result of the mandatory closures and continued limitations on our operations, customer traffic has dramatically decreased, sales plummeted, unemployment soared, and the costs of goods have skyrocketed. Today, even with the limited re-opening of dining rooms, restaurants continue to struggle financially and will face a long multiyear road towards recovery.

As the committee reviews the Bureau of Sanitation proposed recommendations, we ask that you take our concerns regarding the proposed policies below into consideration:

**LASAN Policy 2: Ban Expanded Polystyrene Foam (EPS):**

EPS food containers are among the most efficient for keeping food fresh, and hot or cold, while providing excellent insulation at an economical price. This is the reason why foam-packaging use is standard practice for food vendors, schools, hospitals, nursing homes, non-profit food programs, delis, and family-owned restaurants.

Additionally, banning EPS food service ware used by food establishments for take-out and/or delivery will not only limit food establishments options for take-out containers but also proves challenging since the pandemic has greatly impacted the supply chain of all goods. The cost of goods, including food

service ware has increased, while the supply has decreased. Alternative packaging materials often can be as high as 2-3 times the cost of foam packaging materials. In an industry where the economic margins are razor thin, any additional operational costs just pile on to the ongoing financial strain restaurants continue to feel as a result of local decisions made over the last 20 months.

Also, in some instances switching to alternative take-out containers that are less structurally effective will compromise the quality of the food. Soups and other hot meals will cause alternative containers to breakdown, become soggy and become a potential safety hazard.

**LASAN Policy 3: Ban Single-Use Plastic Bags and Cups:**

Plastic bags are better suited than paper bags for many containers used by restaurants, and reusable bags can pose a health hazard when customers use them for a wide variety of things other than food.

Urging customers to bring their own bags and cups to restaurants and other food/beverage establishments is a major public health concern. Restaurants and other food/beverage establishments are held to high operating standards by the county department of public health which include cleanliness, and sanitization, to protect public health and prevent food borne illness. If a customer takes an unsanitary container to a food/beverage establishment, it puts everyone inside the establishment at risk, including employees and other customers. Cross-contamination and food borne illnesses are a major concern and put restaurants in a potential no win situation.

**LASAN Policy 5: LASAN recommends expanding the Disposable Foodware Accessories Ordinance to mandate reusable foodware for dine-in services; and that all cups, plates, and cutlery utilized for take-out and delivery services, be domestically compostable by 2025. Council, can also mandate a fee for single-use disposable items, such as cups and straws.**

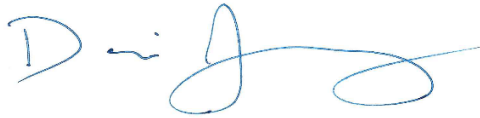
We are strongly opposed to any potential ban on disposable food ware for all dine-in customers and requiring reusable food ware inside the restaurant space. Requiring reusable food ware for all in-store dining creates storage problems given the space limitations in restaurants and the resulting increased utility and water usage required for the additional appropriate dishwashing and sanitizing capability. Restaurants do not generally have control over their physical footprint and may not be able to physically accommodate additional dishwashing machines or storage for the reusable food ware. Moreover, restaurants would need to hire more staff to wash dishes, worsening the labor shortage that all industries are currently facing. Such a requirement may have unintended environmental consequences in addition to the costs and logistical challenges for restaurant compliance.

Additionally, any type of take-out tax will have a disproportionate negative affect on lower-income residents of Los Angeles. Labor costs and commodity costs are at all-time highs currently for restaurants. Many have or will increase prices to offset the costs of new statewide mandates on the restaurant community. A restaurant can only mark up prices so much – and many are at that tipping point. The notion that a packaging tax can just be added onto a customer bill without complications and customer dissatisfaction is not the reality the restaurant community faces currently.

For these reasons, we request that the Energy, Climate Change, Environmental Justice, and River Committee consider each of CRA's strong objections. Restaurants need help from their local governments to survive these financially perilous times and we urge you to consider measures to help

restaurants recover from this crisis and, hopefully, emerge as one of the largest local employers and continue to be an essential part of the fabric of the Los Angeles community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David Juarez". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and a long, sweeping underline.

David Juarez  
Director of Local Government Affairs  
California Restaurant Association