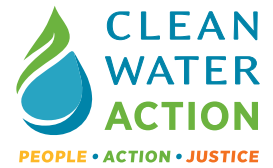


New Jersey Needs to “Skip the Stuff” When Getting Take-Out



The Problem:

✎ It is estimated that [40 billion individual single-use plastic utensils](#) are discarded every day in the United States.¹

✎ Plastic never decomposes but instead gets smaller and smaller as it breaks into microplastics.

✎ Plastic has recently been found making its way to our bloodstream and then into [breast milk](#) and the heart.² According to the [National Institute of Health](#), manufacturing, transportation, use and decomposition of plastic is harmful to our health. It has been linked to numerous cancers, insulin resistance, decreased sex hormones and other negative consequences for our reproductive system.³



✎ Over [100 million plastic utensils](#) are discarded everyday across the United States and it is increasing every year.⁴ Much of this is unused and an unnecessary cost burden to restaurants. Since 2014, online food ordering has increased [300%](#) faster than dine-in, furthering the plastic pollution problem.⁵

✎ The [World Economic Forum estimated](#) that in 2019 the production and incineration of plastic was equivalent to 189 coal-fired power plants. By 2050, it will rise to the equivalent of 615 coal plants' worth and will account for 20% of all oil consumption.⁶

✎ Plastic cutlery is [too small to be recycled](#) as it can jam recycling machinery. It is also too lightweight and too contaminated by food to be recycled.⁷

✎ Some single-use plastic cutlery will have their end of life in [landfills or incinerators](#), furthering the negative health effects for those who live near the disposal sites.⁸ The rest is littered in our streets and waterways.

The Solution:

✎ Restaurants should *only* give out single-use plastic cutlery and condiment containers if requested by customers.

✎ In June 2020, the [New Jersey Township of Cranford banned single-use plastic utensils](#), along with straws, stirrers, and single-use plastic bags, from being dispersed by a retail establishment unless first requested by the customer.⁹ In 2021, Washington followed California with a cutlery ban. New York City passed a “Skip the Stuff” law in February 2023. In March 2023, NJ Assemblyman Herb Conaway, MD introduced legislation ([A5331](#)), which prohibits food service businesses from providing single-use plastic utensils and condiments to customers except upon request.¹⁰



✎ New Jersey needs to pass a “Skip the Stuff” bill so we can continue to be an environmental leader. Together, we will reduce litter, plastics pollution and related health impacts while [saving small businesses money](#) by skipping the stuff in take-out food orders, as seen in work by ReThink Disposable.¹¹

[For more information about Clean Water Action’s Zero Waste initiatives, go to Clean Water Action.](#)

1 <https://www.forbes.com/sites/lauratenenbaum/2019/07/16/plastic-cutlery-is-terrible-for-the-environment-and-we-dont-need-to-have-it-delivered/?sh=6eca21b94019>

2 <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/oct/07/microplastics-human-breast-milk-first-time>

3 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3299092/>

4 <https://nylcv.org/news/skip-the-stuff-a-simple-solution-to-the-single-use-plastics-epidemic/>

5 <https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.add9884>

6 <https://www.sciencetimes.com/articles/45355/20230812/eg-august-13-recycling-plastic-cutlery-help-planet-heres-what.htm>

7 <https://nylcv.org/news/skip-the-stuff-a-simple-solution-to-the-single-use-plastics-epidemic/>

8 <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/01/plastic-pollution-climate-change-solution/#:~:text=In%202019%2C%20the%20CIEL%20estimated%20that%20production%20and,per%20year%20%E2%80%93%20or%20615%20coal%20plants%E2%80%99%20worth.>

9 https://www.cranfordnj.org/sites/g/files/vyhlf436/f/uploads/o-2019-10-plastics_ban.pdf

10 <https://njleg.state.nj.us/bill-search/2022/A5331>

11 <https://rethinkdisposable.org/businesses>