

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Rebecca Gundzik

**Date Submitted:** 03/01/2021 10:26 AM

**Council File No:** 21-0064

**Comments for Public Posting:** I strongly support the Motion (Koretz - Krekorian - Bonin) relative to requesting the City Attorney to prepare and present a Foodware Accessories Upon Request ordinance that would require restaurants and other food service providers, to provide all disposable foodware accessories, only upon the request of the customer, and to enact an opt-in model for foodware accessories across all digital platforms; and related matter. This is an easy step to reduce excess waste and is crucial given the increase in use of single use plastic as a result of the pandemic.

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Emily Parker on behalf of Reusable LA  
**Date Submitted:** 03/01/2021 06:33 PM  
**Council File No:** 21-0064  
**Comments for Public Posting:** This comment is in support of Agenda Item (3) on the March 4th 2021 meeting of the Energy, Climate Change, Environmental Justice, and River committee: Foodware Accessories Upon Request ordinance. Please see attached letter.

# REUSABLE | LA

March 1, 2021

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

## **RE: Foodware Accessories Upon Request Ordinance**

Dear Chair O’Farrell and Honorable Committee Members,

Reusable LA is a coalition of organizations working to reduce plastic pollution in Los Angeles to safeguard our public health, communities, and environment. We envision a thriving culture of reuse and refill in Los Angeles to reduce waste from single-use plastic products and packaging as a model for communities to replicate. Reusable LA strongly supports the City Council motion introduced by Councilmembers Koretz and Krekorian requesting the City Attorney to prepare and present a Foodware Accessories Upon Request ordinance that would require restaurants and other food service providers to provide all disposable foodware accessories only upon the request of the customer. We thank Councilmembers Koretz and Krekorian for their leadership on this matter and we thank Chair O’Farrell for agenizing this motion today.

**Restaurants and the online ordering platforms they use should default to providing *no* single-use accessories for orders unless the customer specifically requests them.** Some platforms and restaurants have already switched to an accessories upon request model, but with an ever-changing landscape of delivery companies and restaurants, we need a legislative solution to ensure that the accessories on request model becomes permanent and normalized behavior in Los Angeles County.

People in the United States use more than 36 billion disposable utensils a year. Laid end to end, they could wrap around the globe 139 times.<sup>1</sup> Each year, billions of single-use plastic and paper accessories—utensils, straws, napkins, and condiments—are given to customers who order meals for take-out or delivery and don’t need them. Most take-out and delivery meals go to homes and offices already stocked with reusable items.

The vast majority of these single-use items cannot be recycled. They add to the plastic pollution crisis that litters our streets, parks, rivers, and oceans and clogs already overfilled landfills. Cutting down trees and extracting more fossil fuels for items that aren’t even used makes no sense in the middle of a climate crisis. These impacts also present significant environmental justice issues, with low-income communities

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<sup>1</sup> Sietsema, Tom, “All my takeout has delivered a mountain of trash. So I asked experts how to minimize it.” Washington Post, Sept. 14, 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/voraciously/wp/2020/09/14/all-my-takeout-has-delivered-a-mountain-of-trash-so-i-asked-experts-how-to-minimize-it/> Accessed Sept. 14, 2020.

and communities of color bearing a disproportionate burden of the impacts from climate change, fossil fuel extraction, and incineration associated with single-use waste.<sup>2</sup>

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the problem. Market research shows that digital food orders increased by 127 percent in the second quarter of 2020 compared with the same time last year.<sup>3</sup> Consumption of single-use plastics has increased by 250-300 percent since the pandemic began, resulting in a thirty-percent increase in waste which is attributed to personal protective equipment (PPE), packaging, and disposable foodware.<sup>4</sup>

The pandemic has stressed our waste management systems to the brink and left our beloved Los Angeles restaurants in dire need of assistance. Nearly 100 restaurants in the LA region have closed permanently due to the pandemic,<sup>5</sup> and hundreds more are struggling to keep their doors open, relying entirely upon takeout and delivery to do so due to city and county mandates. When restaurants provide accessories only upon request, they save money and prevent waste at the same time, benefiting all Angelenos.

Reusable LA strongly supports today's motion and the drafting of a Foodware Accessories Upon Request ordinance in the City of Los Angeles. For a full list of Reusable LA member organizations in support, please visit our website.<sup>6</sup> We encourage staff to read UPSTREAM's Skip the Stuff model policy for sample language for this ordinance and more information on the economic and environmental benefits of this policy.<sup>7</sup> We thank Councilmembers Koretz and Krekorian for their leadership on this issue and the entire Committee for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Alison Waliszewski  
5 Gyres Institute

Leslie Tamminen  
7th Generation Advisors

Jessica Aldridge

Adventures in Waste and SoCal 350

Michael Doshi  
Algalita

Andrea Leon-Grossman  
Azul  
Melissa Aguayo  
Break Free From Plastic

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<sup>2</sup> Climate impacts: U.S. Global Change Research Program (2018), Fourth National Climate Assessment - <https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/>. Incineration and waste management: Martuzzi, M., Mitis, F., Forastiere, F., (2010), Inequalities, inequities, environmental justice in waste management and health, *Eur. J. of Pub. Health* 20:1, 21-26; Baptista, A.I., Amarnath, K.K., (2017), Garbage, Power, and Environmental Justice: The Clean Power Plan Rule, 403 Wm. & Mary Envtl. L. & Pol'y Rev. 41.

<sup>3</sup> Id.

<sup>4</sup> The Economist, "Covid-19 has led to a pandemic of plastic pollution" June 23, 2020- citing the International Solid Waste Association- [https://www.economist.com/international/2020/06/22/covid-19-has-led-to-a-pandemic-of-plastic-pollution?fsrc=newsletter&utm\\_campaign=the-economist-today&utm\\_medium=newsletter&utm\\_source=salesforce-marketing-cloud&utm\\_term=2020-06-23&utm\\_content=article-link-](https://www.economist.com/international/2020/06/22/covid-19-has-led-to-a-pandemic-of-plastic-pollution?fsrc=newsletter&utm_campaign=the-economist-today&utm_medium=newsletter&utm_source=salesforce-marketing-cloud&utm_term=2020-06-23&utm_content=article-link-)

<sup>5</sup> The Infatuation, "LA Restaurants That Have Permanently Closed During COVID-19: A Running List" January 12, 2020 <https://www.theinfatuation.com/los-angeles/features/la-restaurant-closings>

<sup>6</sup> Reusable LA Coalition, [www.reusablela.org](http://www.reusablela.org)

<sup>7</sup> Available at: [Reuse acceleration policies — UPSTREAM | Sparking innovative solutions to plastic pollution](#)

Amy Hammes  
Burbank Recycles

Emily Parker  
Heal the Bay

Chloe Brown  
Open Ocean Minded

Dianna Cohen  
Julia Cohen  
Plastic Pollution Coalition

Keiko Niccolini  
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Craig Cadwallader  
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Graham Hamilton  
Surfrider Foundation, Los Angeles Chapter

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Miriam Gordon

## UPSTREAM

Jackie Nuñez  
The Last Plastic Straw

Cassia Patel  
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