

MOTION

In the U.S., billions of unused foodware accessories including utensils, straws, and condiment packets are tossed away annually. This “zero-use” trash clogs landfills, pollutes our streets and waterways, and adds to the global glut of non-recyclable plastic production.

Coastal Cleanup Month data shows that in September 2020 in LA County, volunteers collected and recorded over 40,000 pieces of trash to total 4,320 pounds. This data shows an increase in food delivery and takeout waste, with foodware accessories the fourth most commonly found item and takeout containers the fifth.

The COVID-19 pandemic has increased reliance on food delivery and takeout and thereby increased the use of single-use items. In light of pandemic mandates, restaurants are depending on to-go and delivery options to survive, and the amount of single-use foodware and accessory items wasted has skyrocketed by approximately 250-300%, according to an estimate by the International Waste Association.

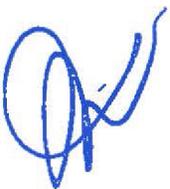
Restaurants currently offer foodware accessories regardless of request, when many customers already have their own reusable utensils, straws and condiments at home. Moving to an on-request model reduces waste and saves businesses money: it is a win-win for establishments, their patrons and the City. Additionally, environmental justice communities disproportionately bear the burden of single-use waste in their neighborhoods.

Eliminating the pointless waste of single-use disposables fits well into the City’s goals to reduce waste, increase energy efficiency, promote equity and environmental justice, address the impacts of climate change and advance a just transition toward more circular, equitable and regenerative economies.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council request the City Attorney, in consultation with the Small Business Commission, to draft a Foodware Accessories Upon Request ordinance that would require restaurants and other food service providers, including virtual restaurants (also known as cloud or ghost kitchens) to provide all disposable foodware accessories, including but not limited to straws, utensils, condiments, napkins etc., only upon the request of the customer, and to require third party food delivery companies and other online platforms for ordering prepared meals to enact an “opt-in” model for foodware accessories across all digital platforms and applications, using the City’s current Disposable Plastic Drinking Straws ordinance as an enforcement model.

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