

FOOD [/FOOD]

De Blasio Orders City Agencies To Stop Purchasing Disposable Plastic Foodware

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➡ Plastic garbage on the beach, Dakar, Senegal HERBERT BERGER / IMAGEBROKER/SHUTTERSTOCK

Mayor Bill de Blasio has instructed all city agencies to stop purchasing single-use plastic foodware, as part of an effort to reduce the city's plastic pollution and decrease its carbon footprint. At a press conference Thursday morning at the Sims Municipal Recycling (http://gothamist.com/2016/10/17/sunset_park_recycling.php#photo-1) facility in Sunset Park, de Blasio signed an executive order directing all relevant agencies to begin reducing their use of single-use plastic foodware immediately, with full implementation of the ban by the end of the year. The order includes exceptions for medical purposes, emergency uses, and for individuals with disabilities who may need certain plastic products such as straws.

Calling the proliferation of plastic trash "a crisis," de Blasio said the order will end the use of a variety of plastic foodware, including knives, spoons, forks, "the child of forks and spoons: the spork," and plastic cups. As alternatives, city agencies will purchase paper straws, paper plates, and compost-friendly utensils made from cornstarch.

City agencies purchase at least 1.1 million pounds of single-use plastic foodware every year, and de Blasio's executive order is expected to reduce that amount by 95 percent. The Sanitation Department collects some 36 million pounds of single use plastic foodware from the residential waste stream annually, while commercial establishments toss out "tens of millions more," according to the city's press release announcing the order.

For individuals with disabilities, some single-use plastic foodware remains a crucial component of their daily lives, particularly straws. A City Council bill to ban disposable plastic straws was introduced last year (http://gothamist.com/2018/05/23/plastic_straw_ban_nyc.php) and provided exceptions for disabled people; later that year, Barclays Center and other eateries

http://gothamist.com/2018/07/26/barclays_center_straw_ban.php) in NYC

announced that they would voluntarily stop giving out straws and plastic stirrers, with similar exceptions.

Victor Calise, Commissioner of the New York City Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities, said yesterday there will still be a sufficient reserve stock of plastic products at the request of the individual.

"People with disabilities are environmentalists too, and we help the Earth as much as we can, but the reality is, some people cannot use currently available alternatives and need plastic straws and foodware," Calise explained. "For example, people with Multiple Sclerosis, people with high-level spinal cord injuries, people with Parkinson's Disease, people with ALS... Unfortunately, currently available non-plastic alternatives don't stand up to that use. They will crack or they will break."

De Blasio's announcement notes that "over 99 percent of plastics derive from fossil fuels and six percent of the global oil market is used to create plastic products. For each ounce of polyethylene produced—the plastic most common for single-use plastics—one ounce of carbon dioxide is emitted." The administration expects the order will reduce New York City's carbon emissions by approximately 500 tons per year.

"Climate change is the existential threat and we have to understand that plastics are inherently a big part of the problem," de Blasio said. "Every single time we purchase something plastic, we're taking a step in the wrong direction."

The City currently spends approximately \$1 million on contracts for single-use plastic foodware in the public sector. Asked what new contracts for non-plastic products might cost, de Blasio could not provide an estimate, telling reporters, "Short-term there often is a greater cost but we believe as the market evolves, that cost is going to come down quite a bit. We believe where there is a greater cost, it's a cost worth paying for."

De Blasio’s executive order comes on the heels of a statewide ban on single-use plastic bags. Passed as part of the state budget at the beginning of April (http://gothamist.com/2019/04/01/cuomo_budget_ny_congestion.php), the new law also gives counties the option of imposing a 5 cent paper bag fee to encourage shoppers to bring their own reusable bags. The plastic bag ban, which has its own exceptions for restaurants, delis, and butchers, goes into effect in March 2020, and a number of City Councilmembers said they would introduce legislation (http://gothamist.com/2019/04/02/nyc_paper_bag_fee.php) for a paper bag fee before then.

Caitlin Kelmar, policy director for Councilmember Rafael Espinal, who introduced the straw ban bill, said they expect the legislation to come up for a vote in May. De Blasio said yesterday he supports the bill.

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Cornelius Tacitus · 2 years ago

A little less plastic won't have much of an effect without dramatic changes in personal behavior throughout society.

1 ^ | ▾ 1 · Share ›



Lei-Zee → Cornelius Tacitus · 2 years ago

Individual behavior changes haven't worked. We need institutional-level changes.

10 ^ | ▾ · Share ›



Cornelius Tacitus → Lei-Zee · 2 years ago

We certainly do, but I am suggesting that such "institutional" changes can only reflect, and flow from, individual behavior. "Institutions" don't run on their own. An institution is made up of individuals, and individuals have to want to change the institution in the first place.

If climate change and pollution are as devastating as the experts are predicting, then perhaps banning plastic forks doesn't quite go far enough.

As you mentioned, individual behavior hasn't changed and it probably won't. Good luck to the future.

^ | ▾ · Share ›



reverse echo → Cornelius Tacitus · 2 years ago

If single use plastic isnt available then people cant personally choose to use it. News like this means people wont be investing in single use plastic - its not a growth industry.

3 ^ | ▾ 1 · Share ›



Tweet_bot → Cornelius Tacitus · 2 years ago

Over the course of a few years, this is a lot less plastic. It's also putting

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pressure on vendors to source materials that will comply with the policy...increasing demand in the market and bringing prices down at the source.

It's also expensive and unsustainable to store single use plastic in landfill. Throwing out garbage is expensive and the price is increasing quickly which people tend to forget

2 ^ | v 1 · Share ›



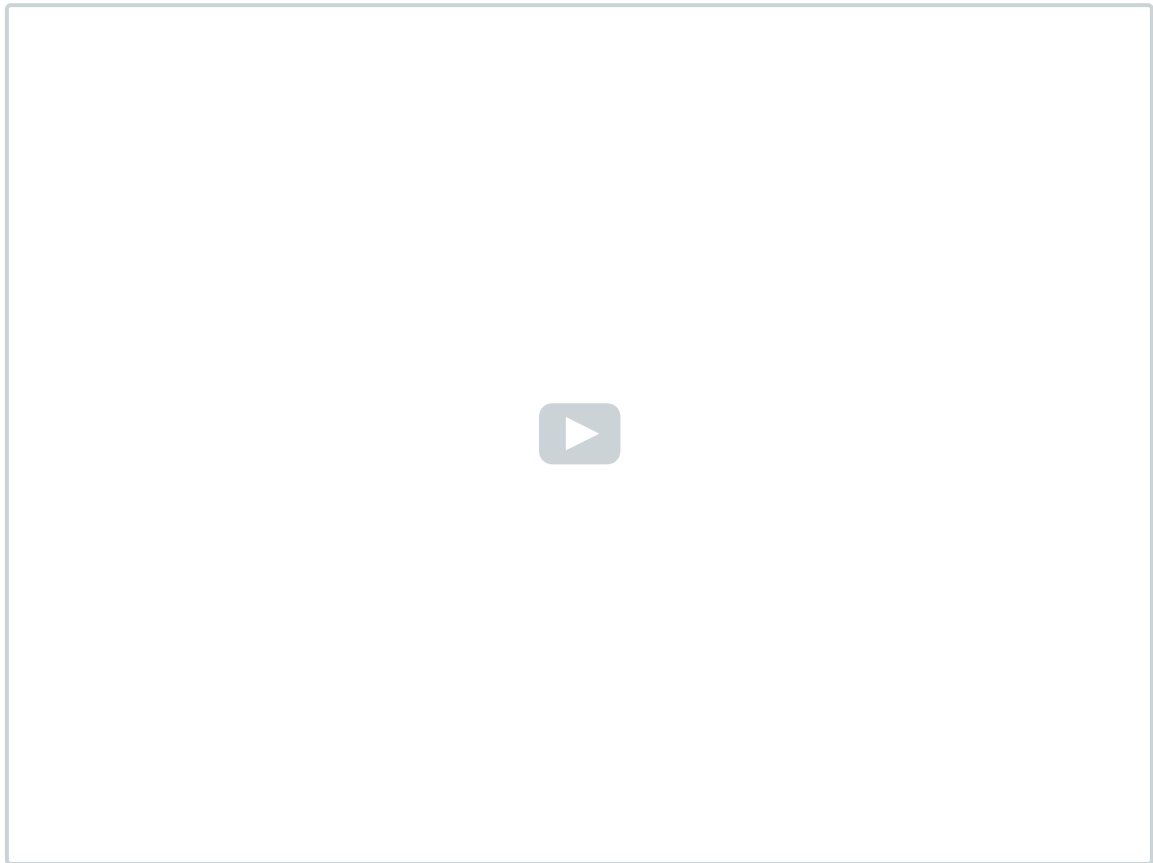
Tweet_bot ↗ Cornelius Tacitus · 2 years ago

Industrial changes and personal changes...why not have both?

1 ^ | v 1 · Share ›



Diego Rotterdam · 2 years ago



2 ^ | v · Share ›



Snarfyguy · 2 years ago

Credit where it's due: good job!

4 ^ | v · Share ›



Avatar

This comment was deleted.



BigAIMoney666 ↗ Guest · 2 years ago

You could try reading the article.

9 ^ | v · Share ›



Spirit of 76 → BigAIMoney666 • 2 years ago • edited

That's too hard. Much easier for smuckyjam to just rant or troll after a TL;DR.

2 ^ | v • Share ›



The_Lisa → Guest • 2 years ago

You have hands, don't you?

1 ^ | v • Share ›



NanGoldinShowers → The_Lisa • 2 years ago

Some people eat their salads with a comb.

4 ^ | v • Share ›



natdawg → NanGoldinShowers • 2 years ago • edited

Plastic salad combs now banned as well!

^ | v • Share ›



Sam Smith → Guest • 2 years ago

They are going to use cornstarch utensils. But how hard is it to keep a set of flatware at your office and to use reusable coffee cups and water cups instead of using single use stuff. Its not that hard to make some minor changes in your day to day life that dramatically cut down on single use plastic waste.

8 ^ | v • Share ›



Bleecker → Sam Smith • 2 years ago • edited

Also Keurig is the devil because not only are those machines incapable of making a decent cup of coffee, those little K-cups can't be recycled. It's also cheaper to use a reusable K-Cup. Still makes a shitty cup of coffee though.

8 ^ | v • Share ›



emjayay → Bleecker • 2 years ago • edited

They are nice in the Subaru dealer waiting room though.

1 ^ | v • Share ›



Avatar This comment was deleted.



BigAIMoney666 → Guest • 2 years ago

You people are fucking deranged.

6 ^ | v • Share ›



leslie → Sam Smith • 2 years ago

what did people do b e f o r e all thos crap....thats got to be the template...back to tbe past.....again...modern capitalism is grounded in

utter waste and garbage.

2 ^ | v · Share ›



Guest → Sam Smith · 2 years ago

I did that for many years at the office. I also had a linen hand towel and French hand soap so I would'd have to use the pink goo junk and waste paper towels.

^ | v · Share ›



Lei-Zee → Guest · 2 years ago

You do know making shivs isn't exactly a general-public kind of problem right

1 ^ | v · Share ›



leslie · 2 years ago

modern capitalism is not possible without plastics. simple.we are in too deep.....glad i ll be dead when its a total mind fk....trust me i do all i can to use as little as possible...vegan...compost everything...no take out...no car...still...scary amount of crap gets tossed. mks me so sad. that picture is of s e n e g a l? how about any beaches in manhattan...brooklyn....on and on...

^ | v 2 · Share ›



Jorale-man · 2 years ago

Good to hear they're moving to impose the 5 cent paper bag fee in NYC, in addition to the plastic bag ban. You really need both for it to be most effective.

4 ^ | v · Share ›



emjayay · 2 years ago · edited

NYC schools not only use single use everything for food service, but do not recycle the leftovers while we're supposed to put that stuff in the new compost containers. Their many garbage dumpsters are full of this stuff. Tons of crap going to landfills from the schools every day.

Somehow years ago here, and today in the EU and Japan and elsewhere, they manage to use real dishes and trays and utensils in schools. Also from what I've seen the quality of the food is generally far better elsewhere. (The former First Lady and others did a lot of good work in this area in that bygone era.)

When I was in school years ago they used divided trays like the army used to use only made of blue melamine plastic, so it was only one thing to put in the dishwasher plus the cheap flatware. And no chance of a dish slipping off a tray etc. (or anyone throwing a dish I suppose.) I see no reason why NYC schools can't at least use something like that. OMG they would have to buy a dishwasher and hire a couple people like they used to.

Feeding kids using disposable junk and serving fast food-like crap teaches them that this is normal.

Japanese schools of course also engage the kids in doing various jobs involving serving the food and cleaning up, which also teaches all kinds of positive things like responsibility and teamwork and manners.

3 ^ | v · Share ›



ohnononono → emjayay · 2 years ago

This is literally just because the people in charge of this stuff at DOE do not care about the food service at all. They consider it beneath them.

^ | v · Share ›



ohnononono · 2 years ago

What about plastic water bottles? Politicos love to have plastic water bottles at all meetings and press conferences.

^ | v · Share ›

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