

MEMO

Date: December 26, 2019

To: Valued Village Business Owner

From: East Aurora Environmental Stewardship Committee

On August 19th the Village of East Aurora passed Local Law 7 of 2019, which prohibits the use of non-compostable, single-use beverage straws and stir sticks in food establishments. The law goes into effect on **March 1, 2020**. We would like to provide you with some information about this new statute and why the law was enacted.

We appreciate you abiding by the new statute, supporting the legislation's goals and helping us move forward to build a more sustainable East Aurora. Your contribution and that of Village residents is vital to the success of this new statute and we are thankful for your efforts.

Every day 500 million straws are used and discarded in the US—enough to wrap around the earth's circumference 2.5 times! That number builds to 175 billion per year that end up in our landfills and waterways. Plastic doesn't biodegrade, it decomposes into smaller pieces, which then find their way into the environment and become ingested by marine and land animals, and into our food chain. The plastic crisis is very real—especially here in the Great Lakes region where micro plastics have invaded every aspect of our lives and threaten our greatest natural resource.

Dedicated East Aurora High School students and community members have worked diligently over the past few years to build support for a common-sense public policy to address the plastic challenge. East Aurora has now joined Troy, NY and many other cities and states in banning non-compostable straws. In addition to the environmental benefits of straw reduction and elimination, we also considered the following when adopting this law:

1. For nearly all uses, straws are not needed-and can be greatly reduced— resulting in savings for the business. For those patrons with special needs who require a straw, there are **numerous non-plastic alternatives available**. You may already be working with your current suppliers to source them. For additional information, you might like to research the following list provided by the Surfrider Foundation:
 - **Aardvark:** Is the biggest paper distributor of straws, <https://www.aardvarkstraws.com>
 - **Simply straws:** Offers glass, paper, and stainless steel straws, <https://simplystraws.com>
 - **Harvest Straws:** Straws made from grain, <http://www.harveststraws.com/>
 - **Klean Kanteen:** Stainless steel reusable straws, <https://www.kleankanteen.com/collections/accessories>
 - **koffiestraw:** Silicone straw which works great for hot beverages, <https://koffiestraw.com/pages/about-us-v2>
 - **Webstaurant:** biodegradable and steel straws, <https://www.webstaurantstore.com/9449/biodegradable-compostable-straws.html>
 - Other great resources can be found at The Last Plastic Straw: <https://thelastplasticstraw.org/resources/>

2. **Eliminating Straws makes good business sense.** We live in competitive times and our community can contend quite well if we think strategically. The individuals we look to for growth over the next few decades are Millennials and Generation Z. These two groups are very focused on environmental issues with 46% “valuing sustainability” and “31% actively boycotting unsustainable companies.”¹ The passion we see in our local high school students is not isolated—they mirror a larger trend that is happening nationwide. Policies like the single-use straw ban and climate-friendly legislation are exactly the types of signals we can send to the next generation that we value them, and perhaps more importantly, that we want them to stay in our community and raise families of their own here.

A copy of Local Law 7 is enclosed for your review. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Environmental Stewardship Committee or the office of the Village Administrator or Clerk Treasurer with any questions by calling 652-6000.

The Environmental Stewardship Committee meets on the first Thursday of each month upstairs in Village Hall at 6:15. You are most welcome to attend! *(Please note that because of the holidays, our upcoming meeting will be held on January 9th.)*

¹ Source: Masdar commissioned Penn Schoen Berland’s 2016 Generation Z Survey