



Voluntary Elimination of Single Use Plastic Straws in the Town of Oak Island, NC

Proposed Initiative

Lee Maxwell

165 NW 6th Street

Member – Environmental Advisory Committee

Rev 10/6/2022

The Problem



- 500 million Straws are used every day in the USA.*
 - Equivalent to filling 125 school buses every day with straws. That's 46,400 school buses every year!
 - 500 million straws could circle around the Earth 2 ½ times.
 - According to projections made by the World Economic Forum (WEF), by the year 2050 there will be more plastic than fish floating about in the world's oceans.
 - It is estimated that around one thousand sea turtles every year succumb to the effects of consuming plastic. **
- Plastic Straws can take up to 200 years to decompose***
- Plastic Straws cannot be recycled
 - Size and Shape

*Various Sources – Milo Cress Original Research

**World Wildlife Fund - The lifecycle of plastics 01 Jul 2021

***Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO) in Australia

What Happens to a Used Plastic Straw*

Must understand the difference between biodegrade and decompose.

- **Biodegrade** means that an item is naturally broken down over time and digested by microorganisms. Once something biodegrades, it is naturally recycled into new organic molecules.
- **Decompose** is defined as the process of something breaking down into smaller and smaller pieces. When plastic degrades, it breaks down into smaller pieces that will never actually go away – they will always be a part of our Earth. – **Micro-Plastics**
- **Plastic straws do not biodegrade and they never fully decompose.** It takes approximately 200 years for a plastic straw to decompose into smaller pieces. Those small pieces will forever be present in the soil, waterways and oceans.
- **To make this problem worse, when plastic straws decompose into smaller pieces, they release toxins and chemicals into our environment that get ingested by wildlife, absorbed into our soil, and get into our waterways. These toxins are then often ingested by humans.**

Initiative Elements



- Education of the issues for the Businesses, Oak Island citizens and visitors. – Explain the Problem and Solution
 - Direct contact with Business managers and owners
 - Informational Posters in the Businesses
 - Handouts and information at events such as Earth Day
 - Information on Town Website
- Encourage establishments to voluntarily eliminate the offering of Single Use Plastic Straws.

Initiative Elements



- Provide “Tools” for businesses to implement the voluntary effort
 - Straw samples and sources to obtain
 - Websites – Educate and provide information to use in their establishments
 - Pledge to eliminate Plastic Single Use Straws in their business.
- Recognition Program for Businesses that execute the program
 - Certificate to display in their business
 - Recognition on the Town website

Rationale



- Oak Island depends on the health of its environment and protection of its sea life for its economic health
- Oak Island can be a leader as an environmental friendly community
- Helps in regard to the overall recycling issue

Cost Comparison



Comparison of Plastic and Non Paper biodegradable Straw.

10" straw

- Plastic \$.015 per straw
- Greenprint- Biodegradable straw – \$.029

Daily net Cost – 150 customers * \$.014 = \$2.10



APPENDIX



10 REASONS TO SKIP THE STRAW

1 500 million straws are used in the U.S. every day. That's enough to fill 125 school buses.



6 Straws and other plastic harm sea life, including fish, turtles and coral reefs.



2 Plastic straws are among the Top Five items collected on the beach every year.



7 Straws are easily carried away by the wind, ending up littering our beaches and in our oceans and waterways.

3 About 90% of trash in the oceans is made from plastic.



8 Every year, the U.S. uses enough straws to wrap around the earth 2.5 times.



4 Plastic trash pollutes most marine habitats, including the deep sea, coral reefs, beaches and rivers.

9 About 90% of seabirds and 30% of turtles have plastics in their stomach.



5 In most places, plastic straws cannot be recycled.



10 Plastic breaks down into smaller pieces, but never fully goes away.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Reduce your use of single-use plastics.

Participate in beach or river cleanups.

Pick up litter and properly dispose of it.

Ask your family and friends to [Skip the Straw!](#)

Websites

What everyone can do

[How To Be a Last Plastic Straw Agent for Change — Plastic Pollution Coalition](#)

Article on De-composition of Plastic Straws

- [Plastic Straw Pollution Facts \(planetprotector.com\)](#)

Request for Sample of Bio-degradable straws

- [Best Drinking Straws for Businesses - phade® \(phadeproducts.com\)](#)