

Support a Polystyrene Phase Out

Polystyrene Foam (Styrofoam) is One of the Most Common Forms of Litter Across Maryland

Why Support a Polystyrene Phase Out?

- Polystyrene foam is often washed or blown into our storm drains and rivers where it breaks up into tiny pieces absorbing 10 times more pesticides, fertilizers, and other chemicals than other kinds of plastic
- People and wildlife that come in contact with this litter will be exposed to increased public health risks
- Occupational exposure to styrene monomers increases risk of lymphoma, leukemia, and other forms of cancer
- As we work to ensure our communities are healthy and clean, eliminating foam puts us one step closer to more fishable and swimmable water in Maryland

NATIONAL TREND

80 jurisdictions in 9 states have passed a foam ban including in Maryland:

Montgomery County
Prince George's County
City of Gaithersburg
City of Takoma Park



PUBLIC HEALTH RISK

Styrene is released more easily into heated food becoming toxic to humans when ingested. US EPA states 100% of Americans already have styrene in their bodies from consuming foods in contact with polystyrene.

ALTERNATIVES

Manufacturers and distributors already provide sustainable alternatives at cost comparable costs. A wholesale shift would drive innovation and access to affordable options.



PACKAGING PHASE OUT

Under the proposed law all one-time food service packaging will be phased out from retailers and organizations including:

Cups | Bowls | Plates

If passed, the law will take effect in January 2018. You can support the bill by:
Signing & Sharing our Petition | Call-Write-Tweet your Representative
Educate your local retailers about sustainable alternatives to polystyrene foam!

The Jones Falls Water Wheel has collected over 419,300 polystyrene containers since May 2014



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How has a Polystyrene law worked in other jurisdictions?

- Maryland and D.C. metro area laws cover 2.5 million people and approximately 15,000 regulated businesses
- By April 2016 approximately 75% of D.C. area businesses were compliant with the law

Who will be affected by the proposed bill?

- Full and limited-service restaurants including smaller cafes and coffee shops
- Fast casual food service including fast food restaurants, food carts, and food trucks
- Food retailers including supermarkets, grocery stores, and convenience stores
- Retailers and wholesalers selling disposable dishware, storage containers, and packing materials
- Institutions including schools, universities, and non-profit organizations

What other products can I use?

- There are environmentally friendly alternatives available such as reusable trays, plates, bowls, cups, paper products, and others made from recycled content which are recyclable and/or compostable
- Non-foam food service products are readily available from various vendors at comparable prices

What does the bill not apply to?

- Food and beverages filled and sealed in foam containers prior to receipt by the food service business
- Foam packaging for raw, uncooked/butchered meat, fish, poultry or seafood for off-premises consumption

Why can't we just recycle foam?

- Most recycling facilities only accept "shape foam" which is the foam used to package products like electronics, limiting consumer accessibility to recycling food packaging foam
- Recycling programs don't on their own reduce litter or address the public health risks of styrene
- A littered paper container has no persistent environmental impact as it completely biodegrades, usually not making it to local waterways after passing through stormwater systems
- By enacting a law we can address environmental and public health risks due to exposure to styrene

