

ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION No. 71

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman LISA SWAIN

District 38 (Bergen and Passaic)

SYNOPSIS

Encourages citizens to reduce or eliminate use of plastic straws and stirrers.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



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1 **AN ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION** encouraging citizens to reduce or
2 eliminate their use of disposable plastic straws and stirrers.
3
4 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey's oceans, beaches, and waterways are among
5 the State's most iconic and beloved natural resources; and
6 **WHEREAS**, These invaluable and unique ecological environments are
7 increasingly under threat from an increase in plastic pollutants; and
8 **WHEREAS**, Plastic straws and stirrers are an increasingly large
9 proportion of the plastic waste found in the waters of the State, and
10 are frequently listed as the most commonly found trash items at
11 beach clean-ups; and
12 **WHEREAS**, Disposable plastic straws and stirrers are used for mere
13 moments, but last indefinitely as discarded waste, as they are not
14 suitable for traditional recycling of plastics, and are discarded in
15 landfills or as litter; and
16 **WHEREAS**, Birds and marine life may mistake these items for food,
17 and die from poisoning or choking in the attempt to consume them;
18 and
19 **WHEREAS**, Large plastics degrade into microplastics, which enter the
20 food chain and pose a significant threat to filter feeders who are
21 exposed to consuming large amounts of plastic; and
22 **WHEREAS**, The World Economic Forum has warned that at the present
23 rate, there will be more plastic than fish in the oceans by 2050; and
24 **WHEREAS**, Many cities across the country have already introduced
25 legislation limiting the distribution of disposable plastic straws,
26 including Seattle, Malibu, and Miami Beach; and
27 **WHEREAS**, Every citizen has a duty to make decisions that will protect
28 the environment for generations to come, and individuals should be
29 reflective about how their consumer choices contribute to
30 environmental problems; and
31 **WHEREAS**, Most people have easily accessible alternatives to
32 disposable plastic straws and stirrers, but do not use them out of
33 minor inconvenience, apathy, or a lack of knowledge about the
34 aggregate impacts of using disposable plastic straws and stirrers;
35 and
36 **WHEREAS**, Many companies produce reusable straws made out of
37 stainless steel, plastics, or bamboo, the use of which would greatly
38 reduce the amount of plastic entering the waste stream; and
39 **WHEREAS**, Reducing consumer demand for disposable plastic straws
40 and stirrers will have large impacts as more businesses would be
41 encouraged to stop offering these single-use plastics in the first
42 instance; and
43 **WHEREAS**, Reducing consumer demand for disposable plastic straws
44 and stirrers may also serve as an important early step to encourage
45 New Jerseyans to make other environmentally minded decisions in
46 their personal lives; and

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1 **WHEREAS**, Other countries, such as Ireland, have succeeded in
2 changing consumer attitudes around the use of plastics, and New
3 Jerseyans should continue to adopt a similar culture of consumer
4 conscientiousness; and

5 **WHEREAS**, The State, and all of its citizenry, have a duty to keep New
6 Jersey's shores pristine and free of harmful debris now and for
7 generations to come; now, therefore,

8
9 **BE IT RESOLVED** by the General Assembly of the State of New
10 Jersey:

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12 1. This House encourages citizens to reduce or eliminate their
13 use of disposable plastic straws and stirrers by using reusable straws
14 and stirrers, and by advocating for the reduction in the use of
15 disposable straws and stirrers to the businesses they frequent and to
16 other citizens.

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18 2. The Governor and the Commissioner of Environmental
19 Protection are respectfully requested to issue similar proclamations
20 to this one in order to raise public awareness of this pressing
21 environmental issue.

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23 3. Copies of this resolution, as filed with Secretary of State,
24 shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the General Assembly to the
25 Governor of New Jersey, the Commissioner of the New Jersey
26 Department of Environmental Protection, the New Jersey Food
27 Council, the New Jersey Restaurant and Hospitality Association,
28 and the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce.

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STATEMENT

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33 This resolution encourages New Jerseyans to reduce or eliminate
34 their use of disposable plastic straws and stirrers.

35 New Jersey's oceans, beaches, and waterways are among the
36 State's most iconic and beloved natural resources, and these
37 invaluable and unique ecological environments are increasingly
38 under threat from an increase in plastic pollutants. Plastic straws
39 and stirrers are an increasingly large proportion of the plastic waste
40 found in the waters of the State, and although disposable plastic
41 straws and stirrers are used for mere moments, they last indefinitely
42 as discarded waste.

43 Disposable plastic straws and stirrers are not suitable for
44 traditional recycling of plastics, and are discarded in landfills or as
45 litter. Plastic straws and stirrers are frequently listed as the most
46 commonly found trash at beach clean-ups. Furthermore, birds and
47 marine life may mistake these items for food, and die from
48 poisoning or choking in the attempt to consume them. Large

1 plastics degrade into microplastics, which enter the food chain and
2 pose a significant threat to filter feeders who are exposed to
3 consuming large amounts of plastic. The World Economic Forum
4 has warned that at the present rate, there will be more plastic than
5 fish in the oceans by 2050.

6 Many cities across the country have already introduced
7 legislation limiting the distribution of disposable plastic straws,
8 including Seattle, Malibu, and Miami Beach. Every citizen has a
9 duty to make decisions that will protect the environment for
10 generations to come, and individuals should be reflective about how
11 their consumer choices contribute to environmental problems. Most
12 people have easily accessible alternatives to disposable plastic
13 straws and stirrers, but do not use them out of minor inconvenience,
14 apathy, or a lack of knowledge about the aggregate impacts of using
15 disposable plastic straws and stirrers. Many companies produce
16 reusable straws made out of stainless steel, plastics, or bamboo, the
17 use of which would greatly reduce the amount of plastic entering
18 the waste stream.

19 Reducing consumer demand for disposable plastic straws and
20 stirrers will have large impacts as more businesses would be
21 encouraged to stop offering these single-use plastics in the first
22 instance. Reducing consumer demand for disposable plastic straws
23 and stirrers may also serve as an important early step to encourage
24 New Jerseyans to make other environmentally minded decisions in
25 their personal lives. Other countries, such as Ireland, have
26 succeeded in changing consumer attitudes around the use of
27 plastics, and New Jerseyans should continue to adopt a similar
28 culture of consumer conscientiousness. The State, and all of its
29 citizenry, have a duty to keep New Jersey's shores pristine and free
30 of harmful debris now and for generations to come.