



Lake County Illinois

Legislation Text

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Joint resolution adopting a policy to prohibit single use plastics in Lake County's operations by January 1, 2023.

- At previous committee meetings, members requested that staff look at options to eliminate single use plastics in the County's cafeteria operations.
- At the Committee's July 7, 2021 meeting, staff presented background and information related to the County's cafeteria vendor along with options related to the elimination of single use plastics in the cafeteria operations.
- The Committee provided consensus to proceed in a partnership with SWALCO on acquiring a consultant to study the operations and summarize options and costs to eliminate single use plastics in Lake County.
- Resource Recycling Systems (RRS) completed an analysis and provided multiple options at the November 3, 2021 committee meeting. The Committee provided staff direction to work with board members on the drafting of a policy resolution for presentation at a subsequent meeting for consideration.
- This resolution aligns with Option 3 presented at the previous committee meeting to eliminate single use plastics from the County's cafeteria and vending operations by January 1, 2023.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the 2021 report from the United Nation's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which is approved by 195 governments and based on more than 14,000 studies, states that human-induced global warming of 1.5 degrees by 2050 is likely unavoidable and will lead to continued and increased volatile weather events, the extinction of species, water shortages, and flooding; and

WHEREAS, according to the same report, "Global warming of 1.5°C and 2°C will be exceeded during the 21st century unless deep reductions in CO2 and other greenhouse gas emissions occur in the coming decades"; and

WHEREAS, Lake County is currently experiencing the effects of climate change, including increased rainfall and flooding, record heat waves, Lake Michigan surges, flooded crops, drought, and reduced native oak canopy; and

WHEREAS, plastic production contributes to planet-warming greenhouse gas emissions at every point in its life cycle, including the process of drilling for and refining the oil and gas used to make plastic; and

WHEREAS, so-called “cracker plants,” which break ethane molecules from natural gas into the chemical building blocks of plastic, are responsible for large amounts of carbon output in the United States each year, equal to millions of passenger vehicles; and

WHEREAS, a majority of emissions- and pollution-producing plants are located near low-income communities and communities of color; and

WHEREAS, 300 million tons of plastic are produced each year worldwide, half of which is for single-use items thrown out within minutes, such as bottles, straws, and wrappers; and

WHEREAS, according to a 2018 study, an estimated 91% of plastic does not get recycled but ends up in landfills or as litter on land and in oceans; and

WHEREAS, scientists estimate that by the year 2050, there will be more plastic than fish in the ocean by weight; and

WHEREAS, 11 million pounds of plastic waste enters Lake Michigan each year, more than any other Great Lake; and

WHEREAS, microplastics have been found in soil, water, air, crops, marine animals, humans, and in the fetal side of placentas, and the health effects are not yet understood; and

WHEREAS, Lake County is committed to combating climate change and will take efforts where possible to make changes that support the environment.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that as of January 1, 2023, single-use plastics associated with service ware, eating, and drinking, such as cutlery, coated paper plates, beverage bottles, to-go containers, lids, straws, stir sticks, six-pack rings, shopping or storage bags, and plastic wrap, will cease to be purchased, sold, or distributed within Lake County government operations and all County government sites over which the Lake County Board has authority, including the County’s cafeteria operations and vending machines; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the attached policy document is adopted; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that County departments shall make every effort to reduce the purchase of single-use, as well as multi-use, plastic in all forms, including packaging, and utilize reasonable alternatives where they exist; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Lake County Board encourages independently-elected departments to join the Board in these efforts to reduce the carbon imprint of County Government.

DATED at Waukegan, Illinois, on December 14, 2021.