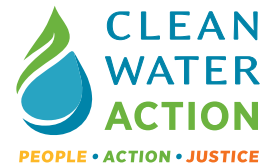


New Jersey Needs to “Skip the Stuff”



The Problem:

✎ It is estimated that [40 billion individual single-use plastic utensils](#) are discarded every year in the United States.¹

✎ Plastic never decomposes but instead gets smaller and smaller as it breaks into micro and nanoplastics. Micro and nanoplastics have been found throughout the world, even in the most remote places like Mount Everest and the Arctic.

✎ Research by the [PlastChem Project](#) identified that plastic is made from 16,000 different types of chemicals which can leach from products and migrate into our bodies through the air we breathe and food and water we consume.²

✎ According to the [National Institute of Health](#), manufacturing, transportation, use and decomposition of plastic is harmful to our health. It has been linked to numerous cancers, insulin resistance, neurological and mental health issues, asthma, decreased sex hormones, birth defects and other endocrine disruptors and negative consequences for our reproductive system.³



✎ [Most plastic utensils are unused](#) and an unnecessary cost burden to restaurants.⁴ Since 2014, online food ordering has increased [300%](#) faster than dine-in, furthering the plastic pollution problem.⁵

✎ The [World Economic Forum estimated](#) that in 2019 the production and incineration of plastic was equivalent to 189 coal-fired power plants. By 2050, it will rise to the equivalent of 615 coal plants' worth and will account for 20% of all oil consumption.⁶

✎ Plastic cutlery is [too small to be recycled](#) as it can jam recycling machinery. It is also too lightweight and too contaminated by food to be recycled.⁷

✎ Some single-use plastic cutlery will have their end of life in [landfills or incinerators](#), furthering the negative health effects for those who live near the disposal sites.⁸ The rest is littered in our streets and waterways.

The Solution:



➤ Restaurants should only provide single-use cutlery and condiments if requested by customers and only reusable foodware should be provided for dine-in, saving restaurants money by not purchasing unnecessary items and reducing clutter for customers and waste and toxics for the environment.

➤ In 2019 and 2020, at least eight (8) New Jersey municipalities wove a municipal ordinance that prohibited a food provider from offering single-use food and beverage accessories, except upon customer's request, into their bag ban. In 2022, California and Washington had cutlery bans go into effect. New York City passed a "Skip the Stuff" law in February 2023.

➤ In 2024, Clean Water Action led Skip the Stuff at the municipal level, resulting in 10 additional NJ towns passing municipal ordinances and 1 with a resolution. Red Bank (Ordinance 2024-08) and the Borough of Garwood (24-09) led the way, followed by Hoboken (24-520) and [Jersey City](#) (24-068) amongst others.⁹

➤ Clean Water Action has led at the state level to get S3195 and A5157 introduced in 2024 with strong sponsors. In October 2024, S3195 passed out of Senate Environment and Energy and one step closer to being the strongest state legislation, applying to both take-out and dine-in single-use disposables.

➤ Urge your town to pass a "Skip the Stuff" ordinance while awaiting state legislation — [learn more here](#).¹⁰

Together, we will reduce litter, plastics pollution and related health impacts while saving small businesses money by skipping the stuff, as seen in work by [ReThink Disposable](#).¹¹

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- ✓ Zero Waste Campaign: www.cleanwater.org/campaign/zero-waste-new-jersey
- ✓ Skip the Stuff: www.cleanwater.org/skip-stuff-new-jersey
- ✓ Make a Special Gift: www.cleanwater.org/nj-donate-rethink-disposable

1 <https://www.forbes.com/sites/lauratenenbaum/2019/07/16/plastic-cutlery-is-terrible-for-the-environment-and-we-dont-need-to-have-it-delivered/?sh=6eca21b94019>

2 <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/first-comprehensive-plastics-database-tallies-staggering-16-000-chemicals/>

3 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3299092/>

4 <https://nylcv.org/news/skip-the-stuff-a-simple-solution-to-the-single-use-plastics-epidemic/>

5 <https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.add9884>

6 <https://www.sciencetimes.com/articles/45355/20230812/eg-august-13-recycling-plastic-cutlery-help-planet-heres-what.htm>

7 <https://nylcv.org/news/skip-the-stuff-a-simple-solution-to-the-single-use-plastics-epidemic/>

8 <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/01/plastic-pollution-climate-change-solution/#:~:text=In%202019%2C%20the%20CIEL%20estimated%20that%20production%20and,per%20year%20%E2%80%93%20or%20615%20coal%20plants%E2%80%99%20worth.>

9 <https://cleanwater.org/releases/jersey-city-council-unanimously-skips-stuff>

10 <https://cleanwater.org/skip-stuff-ordinances-new-jersey>

11 <https://cleanwater.org/rethink-disposable-businesses>