



CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Manhattan Beach City Council Passes Historic Ban on Single-Use Plastic Straws, Stirrers, and Utensils to Reduce Plastic Pollution

Manhattan Beach, CA (June 13, 2018) – The Manhattan Beach City Council voted unanimously to prohibit the sale, distribution and use of single-use plastic straws, plastic stirrers, and plastic utensils within the City during the City Council meeting on Tuesday, June 5, 2018 in order to protect the environment from plastic pollution.

“We have the opportunity to be environmental leaders and take action on addressing the plastic pollution problem, just as we did with plastic bags and polystyrene years ago” Mayor Amy Howorth said. “Manhattan Beach residents value clean neighborhoods, beaches, and healthy oceans. These are key reasons why we live here. Getting rid of single-use plastics makes sense and is the right thing to do for our coastal community. Plastic straws, stirrers, and utensils are now added to the list of plastic pollution that we will stop at the source so it doesn’t reach our beaches and the ocean. Our City leadership and community is committed to keeping our beaches clean and healthy for our families and future generations.”



Protecting the environment is part of Manhattan Beach’s core values. The ordinance is part of the City’s Plastic Free MB campaign to eliminate the use of a variety of single-use plastic items in order to protect our environment and the oceans. Yet, plastic straws and utensils of all shapes, sizes and colors are popping up everywhere from cocktails to delivery food to unasked-for glasses of water. Collectively, Americans use roughly 500 million plastic straws daily – enough to fill 125 school buses each day and wrap around our entire planet 2.5 times.

Because they’re not recyclable, most plastic straws and utensils end up in landfills. The rest wind up polluting the environment and posing a threat to aquatic life. In fact, recent studies show that half of

all sea turtles and nearly all seabirds have eaten plastic, and by 2050, it's expected that there will be more plastic in the ocean than fish, by weight.

Coastal Cleanup Day has tracked the amount of trash collected since 1992, and data show that straws and utensils are in the top six most commonly found pieces of trash during beach cleanups in California, and are also some of the most harmful pieces of plastic pollution to marine life.

Plastic straws, stirrers, and utensils never biodegrade. The plastic is broken down into smaller pieces that become difficult to manage in the environment. Nearly all plastic, regardless of whether it has been recycled, still exists. It is estimated that there are over five trillion pieces of plastic in the ocean. Tiny plastic fragments in the ocean are eaten by marine wildlife and enter the food chain.

The newly-adopted ordinance updates Manhattan Beach's Municipal Code to prohibit single-use plastic straws, utensils, and stirrers. This is paired with an upon-request policy for non-plastic disposable items. Only straws and utensils made from non-plastic materials, such as wood, metal, bamboo, fiber, glass are allowed. Bioplastics, PLA plastics, and #7 plastics are NOT allowed.

In addition to this, the City Council also updated the City's polystyrene ordinance to ban polystyrene egg cartons and produce trays as well as polystyrene packing materials like foam peanuts.

A grace period is available for businesses to exhaust their existing supply of plastic straws and utensils, and polystyrene packing materials, and procure alternatives by January 1, 2019. A list of alternatives and more information on plastic pollution is available via a guide on the City's website at www.citymb.info/PlasticFreeMB.

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