

Reusable Food Ware Ordinance

Plastic single-use food ware items like plates, bowls, and utensils are prevalent in daily life. And while straws often get the most attention, these food ware items are also problematic, as they frequently serve a useful life of just minutes while their impact on human health and the environment is significant and long lasting.

StopWaste is currently considering options, including a possible ordinance, to reduce consumption of such items. If adopted countywide, the ordinance would apply to all Alameda County eating and drinking establishments, including food trucks and fast food establishments, as well as third-party delivery services such as DoorDash and Uber Eats. To date, 16 ordinances are in place or in development throughout California, with nine in the Bay Area alone.

A critical aspect of any strategy is to foster widespread adoption of durable reusable cups, containers, and cutlery. Switching from single-use plastics to compostable fiber is not a solution because it does not reduce consumption – many of these items still end up as litter, or are not successfully processed as recycling or compost, and end up in the landfill.

Potential Implementation Approaches

One option is to develop a **model ordinance**, ready for customization and implementation directly by member agencies. The second would be a **countywide ordinance**, which could be rolled out in distinct phases that add more complex elements over time. This would allow affected parties to prepare for the changes and address operational considerations.

Possible Ordinance Elements

- ▶ Reusable food ware required for all dine-in establishments
- ▶ Single-use food ware must be BPI-certified compostable fiber (non-plastic)
- ▶ Single-use accessories available only on demand/self-service
- ▶ 25¢ charge on single-use cups
- ▶ 25¢ - 50¢ charge per meal for to-go food ware if requested



Single-use food ware at a dine-in establishment

A durable, reusable food ware alternative

Model Ordinance

- + Greatest flexibility to member agencies
- + StopWaste provides ordinance language, menu of elements, and messaging templates
- + Best option if one size doesn't fit all
- Could result in inconsistent implementation and confusion across jurisdictions

OR

Countywide Ordinance

- + Greatest waste reduction impact
- + StopWaste coordinates TA, outreach, and promotion
- + Requires consistency across county
- Would require StopWaste to shift resources away from other priorities

Community Considerations for a Possible Reusable Food Ware Ordinance:

1. Is this an important issue for your community?
2. If important, do you think that it should be a countywide ordinance implemented by StopWaste, or a model ordinance that can be customized and implemented directly by cities?
3. If countywide, would your jurisdiction be willing to contribute resources to StopWaste in order to implement?
4. If a model ordinance works better, is your jurisdiction able to take on its implementation/enforcement along with the requirements of SB 1383?