



GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA
Ministry of Human Affairs

REGULATING SINGLE USE PLASTICS IN BERMUDA



**A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE
POLICY DISCUSSION PAPER**

OCTOBER 2021

“The horrific impact of plastic on the environment is a global issue. In the era of the manifested impact of climate change, Bermuda must consistently act to preserve its oceans. To this end, single-use plastics will be eliminated by 2022 and the intervening years will be spent educating the community about recycling and re-usable items and encouraging greater sensitivity to the ocean and its importance to our lives.”

Speech from the Throne, Bermuda, November 2018

WHY DOES THE GOVERNMENT WANT TO REGULATE SINGLE-USE PLASTICS?

The Speech from the Throne in 2018 outlined that the impact of plastic on the marine environment and on the climate crisis are important drivers for the change, but there is also the issue of human health which is equally important a factor. These are the three main reasons why the government wants to regulate single use plastics (SUPs).

1. Marine pollution

- Around 8 million metric tonnes of plastic a year being dumped into the oceans, of which it is estimated about 70% is SUP
- SUPs comprise all of the top ten most common items found in international coastal clean-ups, including in Bermuda. These items include: cigarette butts; straws/stirrers; cutlery and crockery; beverage bottles, caps and lids; and bags

2. Climate change

- Plastic production is contributing to the problem of global greenhouse gas emissions as 4% of the world's annual petroleum production is used to make plastic and another 4% gets burned in the refining process. Then the cost of shipping further uses fossil fuels contributing to the climate crisis
- Since half of all plastic production is for SUP, that means over 5% of all the entire world's oil production goes to creating and distributing SUP items

3. Human health

- More and more studies are revealing the negative impacts on human health based on levels of chemical contamination found in diverse food products in our diets
- One 2019 study has estimated that consuming every-day food items, we may ingest up to 5 grams of plastic a week, or the equivalent of 1 credit cards worth of plastic
- Ingested micro-plastics (pieces of plastic less than 5mm in size) lose some of these chemicals via the digestion process in the consumer
- Some of these chemicals are termed “endocrine disruptors” which can mimic or interfere with hormones leading to potential toxicity to lung cells, the liver and brain cells

WHAT SINGLE-USE PLASTICS DOES THE GOVERNMENT WANT TO REGULATE?

The policy paper lays out a suggested list of items that should be regulated. These include, but are not limited to:

- Styrofoam products
- Plastic utensils, bags, and trays
- Plastic water bottles and other plastic beverage bottles
- Plastic single-serving food sachets such as mayonnaise and ketchup sachets
- Plastic-lined paper cups and food containers

A final list of items to regulate in the initial legislation will not be decided until the public consultations with stakeholders including environmental groups, businesses and the general public have concluded and the feedback has been analysed.

HOW DOES THE GOVERNMENT INTEND TO REGULATE THESE ITEMS?

The government recognises the need to work with all interested parties to achieve the stated aim of playing our part in reducing the impacts of plastic production, use and disposal on our oceans, our climate and our health. As such, the regulation of SUPs will be a phased process starting with the current public consultation period.

- Phase One: *Collect feedback to the policy paper during 2021
 *Make any adjustments as necessary
 *Prohibit the importation of certain SUPs in 2022
- Phase Two: *Allow a suitable period to exhaust existing stocks
 *Prohibit the sale, distribution, and use of the banned SUPs in 2022 / 2023
- Phase Three: *Recommence public consultations in 2022 / 2023
 *Return to phase one for the next round of bans to extend prohibited SUP items

PLEASE REMEMBER TO PROVIDE YOUR FEEDBACK TO THE GOVERNMENT AT:

<https://forum.gov.bm>

**Thank you for playing your part in ensuring a cleaner, greener,
healthier Bermuda for our future generations**

Please consult the full policy discussion document available at forum.gov.bm or from the Department of Communications for all references