



50 Federal Street, 3rd floor
Boston MA 02110
(617) 423-5775
www.sierraclubmass.org

April 29, 2024

Dear Needham Town Meeting:

The Massachusetts Chapter of the Sierra Club has been actively supporting efforts to reduce waste and curb the use of single-use plastic at the state and local levels. In the last eight years, more than 170 communities across the state from Williamstown to the Cape have passed local plastic pollution laws. This represents well over 4 million residents or two-thirds of the state's population.

State communities continue to consider and pass additional laws restricting single-use plastics. Warrant article 45 incorporates items that have been widely banned in other communities, and also in proposed state legislation.

There is no excuse for single-use plastic made of petrochemicals derived from non-renewable, fracked natural gas and oil. The polystyrene takeout containers, splash sticks, straws, and stirrers cannot be recycled at all. Recycling, even when possible, cannot solve the plastic waste problem, because it is inconvenient, inefficient and has resulted in return rates of less than 10%.

Eliminating several plastic food ware items in Needham from the waste stream will be a significant positive environmental action. Eliminating such non-biodegradable materials will also beautify the town by reducing the unsightly and permanent litter that plastic has caused. These items are easily carried by wind and water into the Charles River and ultimately the Atlantic Ocean, harming wildlife all along the way. Furthermore, they break down into plastic micro- and nanoparticles that can be ingested by aquatic animals and enter the human food chain.

We understand the ban on plastic water bottles is being tabled for future consideration, and encourage you to consider that in a future warrant as has been done in several metropolitan area towns.

The Massachusetts Sierra Club strongly endorses Warrant Article 45. This by-law is the next logical step following the town's bag by-law. We urge a favorable action on this warrant article.

Respectfully,

Vickash Mohanka
Mass. Sierra Club, Chapter Director
vick.mohanka@sierraclub.org