



Statement of Support for Article 45 (Single Use Plastics Ban)

The League of Women Voters of Needham (LWVN) board strongly endorses Article 45, "Citizens' Petition - Single Use Plastics Ban By-Law," in the warrant for the upcoming May 2024 Town Meeting. This article is being put forward by the Plastics Reduction Team of Green Needham Collaborative.

The petition would ban four types of single use plastics beginning on January 1, 2025:

- polystyrene (styrofoam) containers
- plastic straws, unless requested by patrons
- plastic stirrers
- splash guards/sticks (small plastic pieces that go into the hole on the cup lid to prevent spills)

As written, the petition would also ban single-use plastic bottles with a volume of one liter or less, beginning January 1, 2026. LWVN understands that the petitioners intend to propose an amendment to remove this section of the bylaw. *We support this section and hope that the Plastics Reduction Team will bring it forward in the near future.*

The League's national position on Environmental Protection and Pollution Control states: "The League supports the preservation of the physical, chemical, and biological integrity of the ecosystem and maximum protection of public health and the environment." (*Impact on Issues: A Guide to Public Policy Positions of the League of Women Voters 2022 - 2024*, p 96.)

LWVN supports the petition because single-use plastics are harmful to the environment and, as evolving evidence strongly suggests, are also harmful to human health.

[Ninety-eight percent of single-use plastics are made from fossil fuels](#) and therefore contribute to climate change. Needham, like other communities in the state, country, and world, is already seeing the negative impacts of climate change. In addition, these plastics, once produced, remain in our environment indefinitely, where they have the potential to [impact our health](#). The [majority of plastics are actually not recyclable](#), even if they carry a triangular chasing arrows' symbol. As a result, the continued use of single-use plastics adds to a growing pollution problem that sullies our communities and natural spaces, and endangers human and animal health.