

Reducing Plastic Pollution and Improving Recycling (E2SSB5022 Senator Das)

AN ACT Concerning the management of certain materials to support recycling and waste and litter reduction

The problem: We have a waste crisis *and* we are drowning in plastic pollution



Plastics uses up resources

Plastic items are made from finite, nonrenewable natural **gas and oil resources**. We use these items for a short time and then discard them.

Plastic pollution harms our marine environment

Expanded polystyrene (also known as Styrofoam™), straws, utensils, cups and condiment packets frequently wind up as litter or end up polluting our fresh and marine waters. They break up but do not readily biodegrade, lasting for years, harming fish and wildlife.

Expanded polystyrene foam products and plastic serviceware are mostly not recyclable and contaminate compost and recycling facilities

It is very difficult to recycle these products because it is difficult to remove food waste from them. And many of these products are small and fall through recycling equipment. Further, plastics are the #1 source of contamination at our commercial composters.

The recycling system needs a demand push

We need to jump-start the market for recyclable commodities in order to increase the value of recycled content relative to cheap virgin materials: oil and gas.

What this bill does:

1. Minimum recycled content for plastic beverage containers, household cleaning and personal care bottles/jugs and trash bags

Requires minimum postconsumer recycled plastic by weight (on average for each manufacturer):

| Plastic beverage containers  | Plastic household cleaning products and personal care product containers  | Plastic trash bags  |
|---|--|--|
| 15% by January 1, 2023 | 15% by January 1, 2025 | 10% by January 1, 2023 |
| 25% by January 1, 2026 | 25% by January 1, 2028 | 15% by January 1, 2025 |
| 50% by January 1, 2031 | 50% by January 1, 2031 | 20% by January 1, 2027 |

Dairy milk container requirements: 5-year extension. Exempts prescription and non-prescription drugs and medical devices.

2. Expanded polystyrene (styrofoam) ban

Beginning June 1, 2023, prohibits sale, manufacture, and distribution of these expanded polystyrene foam products into WA:

Food service products



Coolers



Packaging material (peanuts)



Exempts pre-packaged items, and packaging for raw, uncooked, or butchered meat, fish, poultry, or seafood, vegetables, fruit, or egg cartons, as well as coolers for medical items or shipping perishable commodities.

3. Plastic "Serviceware" (straws, utensils, condiment packages and cold cup lids) optional

Beginning January 1, 2022, restaurants and food service businesses would provide straws, utensils, condiment packages and beverage cold cup lids only *on request* or in self-serve bins on the counter.



Exempts need for request for cup lids for: beverages provided through delivery service or curbside pickup, and served via a drive-through.

It is time to improve our recycling system and reduce plastic pollution in WA