

Environmental

Advocates

NY

EANY SUPPORTS

Skip the Straw, Please



Memo #45

[A.207 \(Rosenthal, et al.\)](#)

[S.1505 \(Hoylman, et al.\)](#)

Explanation:

This legislation prohibits restaurants from providing plastic straws to customers unless explicitly requested, as well as prohibits restaurants from providing plastic stirrers. By discouraging single-use plastic straws and banning plastic stirrers this bill would address the harmful accumulation of plastics in our environment.

Americans use an average of [500 million](#) plastic straws per day, most of which is a convenience rather than a necessity. Most plastic straws are not recyclable and end up in our waterways and oceans. Plastic straws are harmful, even deadly, to birds, turtles, and marine life and break down over time into microplastics that are found in our drinking water. They are one of the top 10 types of marine debris found every year during the [Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup](#). By 2050, there will be [more plastic in the ocean than fish \(by weight\)](#).

This legislation would apply to restaurants regardless of whether food is consumed on or off the premises. This legislation would go a long way to help stop the flow of unnecessary single-use plastics that customers receive when dining in or taking away food from an eating establishment. With only [9 percent of plastic being recycled](#) in the United States, we need to find ways to decrease the plastic waste that is proving to be detrimental to our health and our environment. Discouraging single-use plastic cutlery in New York State is an important step in this direction.

Summary:

This legislation amends the environmental conservation law to require that restaurants only provide plastic straws to customers when explicitly requested and bans plastic stirrers. The legislation allows restaurants to provide non-plastic alternatives such as metal, bamboo, wood or compostable materials (but only if there is access to curbside composting). The bill also prohibits any plastic straw provided on request to be individually wrapped in plastic.