

Environmental

Advocates

NY

# EANY SUPPORTS

## Skip the Cutlery, Please



Memo #46

[A.5383 \(Rosenthal\)](#)

No same as

### Explanation:

This legislation prohibits restaurants from providing single-use plastic cutlery to customers unless explicitly requested. By discouraging single-use plastic items, such as cutlery, this bill would address the harmful accumulation of plastics in our environment as well as curb the production of virgin plastic materials.

According to the Ocean Conservancy a staggering 8 million metric tons of plastic enters marine waters annually, which equates to approximately one entire garbage truck full of plastic being dumped into the ocean every minute of every day. By 2050, there will be [more plastic in the ocean than fish \(by weight\)](#). Plastic cutlery, like 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.

Plastic cutlery, in good company with plastic straws, bags and other single-use plastics, are in the top 10 types of marine debris found every year during the [Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup](#). Billions of forks, knives, and spoons are thrown away each year. The Ocean Conservancy reported in just one day, volunteers removed close to [2 million](#) single-use plastic forks, knives and spoons from waterways around the globe.

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 make providing plastic cutlery by a restaurant on request only. The legislation allows restaurants to provide non-plastic cutlery alternatives such as metal, bamboo, wood or compostable materials (but only if there is access to curbside composting). The bill also prohibits any plastic cutlery provided on request to be individually wrapped in plastic.