Takoma Park City Council Resolution
Restricting Polystyrene

The Young Activist Club asked Mayor Bruce Williams and the City Council to ban use of city funds to purchase polystyrene food service ware. We drafted the resolution (after researching and looking at other cities’ laws and at Takoma Park’s resolution banning use of city funds to purchase single-serve bottled water) and we testified at a Council meeting. On June 7, 2010, the City Council unanimously passed the following resolution! Thank you!

Introduced by:

CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND

RESOLUTION 2010-

CONCERNING THE PURCHASE OF POLYSTYRENE FOOD SERVICE WARE

WHEREAS, the City of Takoma Park has a duty to protect the natural environment and the health of its residents; and

WHEREAS, items of polystyrene food service ware are common environmental pollutants, yet there continues to be no meaningful recycling of these items; and

WHEREAS, compostable or biodegradable food service ware is a safer, more ecologically sound alternative; and

WHEREAS, polystyrene foam is notorious as a pollutant that breaks down into smaller, non-biodegradable pieces that are ingested by marine life and other wildlife, thus harming or killing them; and

WHEREAS, polystyrene is made from the monomer styrene, which is a suspected human carcinogen and known neurotoxin which potentially threatens human health; and

WHEREAS, the general public is not typically warned of any potential hazard related to the manufacturing and use of polystyrene in food service ware, particularly in the immigrant and non-English-speaking community; and

WHEREAS, due to these concerns, a number of U.S. cities have banned polystyrene food service ware, and many local businesses and several national corporations have successfully replaced polystyrene foam and other non-biodegradable food service ware with affordable, safe and reusable or compostable products; and
WHEREAS, effective ways to reduce the negative environmental impact of throw-away food service ware include reusing food service ware or using compostable or biodegradable materials made from renewable resources such as paper, bamboo, cornstarch and sugarcane; and

WHEREAS, restricting the purchase of polystyrene food service ware by the City of Takoma Park will further protect the public health and safety of the Takoma Park residents, the natural environment, waterways, and wildlife, and will advance the Council’s goal of developing a sustainable city.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND THAT the City shall cease purchasing polystyrene (resin code #6) food service ware; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT organizers of public events, businesses, families and individuals in Takoma Park are encouraged to seek and use alternatives to polystyrene (resin code #6) food service ware.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT this resolution shall become effective on September 1, 2010.

Adopted this 7th day of June 2010.

Attest:

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Jessie Carpenter, CMC
City Clerk