

Dear Business Owner and Manager,

We are here on behalf of the League to Save Lake Tahoe to ask for your help protecting our local environment from harmful plastic pollution.

Businesses like yours are a huge part of the Tahoe community. Your customers are locals like us and visitors who come here to experience Tahoe's natural beauty. Plastic pollution threatens all of that. We want to share some shocking facts about single-use plastics and remind you about some existing ordinances that will help reduce plastic waste in our environment.

### **Disturbing Plastic Facts**

- Between 2014 and 2022, the League's staff and volunteers removed 368,628 single-use plastic items from Tahoe's environment, including 29,277 polystyrene items (foam), 21,592 straws and stirrers, and 8,707 utensils. Unfortunately, much more plastic has escaped into the environment and the Lake.
- Single-use plastics like bags, straws, cutlery, and bottles are only used for a few minutes, but they stay in our environment forever. Discarded plastics are particularly damaging to our water quality because they are rarely recycled, they break down into smaller pieces (microplastics), and they persist in our environment.
- Plastics clog storm drains, leach chemicals into the environment, and harm the Lake and wildlife.
- Bottled water contains 200% more microplastics than our clean Tahoe Tap water! Microplastics from bottled water get into our bodies, resulting in adverse health impacts.

### **Existing Ordinances (California only)**

In 2016, California banned single-use carryout bags (SB 270). Grocery stores, retail stores with a pharmacy, or convenience stores/food marts/liquor stores may not provide free single-use plastic carryout bags. Instead, these stores may sell reusable plastic bags made with recycled content or recycled paper bags, and they must charge at least ten cents per bag.

In 2018, California passed a law (AB 1884) prohibiting full-service restaurants from providing single-use plastic straws to customers unless requested. In 2021, AB 1276 added a prohibition on restaurants and third-party food delivery platforms (e.g., Door Dash) from providing specific single-use food ware accessories and condiments unless requested by the customer, including utensils, chopsticks, condiment cups and packets, straws, stirrers, splash sticks, and cocktail sticks; condiment packets including single-use packets of ketchup, mustard, hot sauce, salsa, soy sauce, sugar, and salt.

In June 2022, SB 54 passed, requiring all packaging in the state to be recyclable or compostable by 2032. In the case of expanded polystyrene (Styrofoam), at least 25% of polystyrene must be recyclable or compostable by 2025, or it will be banned. It is best to prepare by getting rid of polystyrene now.

Despite no legal requirements in Nevada, there are affordable, compliant, and environmentally friendly alternatives available. Included with this letter is a guide to help find alternatives to plastics - and there are more options all the time.

### **Your role**

Choose to refuse - say no thanks to disposable plastics and choose reusables when possible. Provide to-go utensils and straws on request only. Choose lower-impact products like cardboard, paper, aluminum, stainless steel, foil, and recycled materials instead of plastics. Together, we can Keep Tahoe Blue.

Best regards,

Marilee Movius, Courtney Thomson and Kelci Brown  
*Community Engagement Team*  
League to Save Lake Tahoe

