

Resolution No.: 17-522  
Introduced: July 17, 2012  
Adopted: July 31, 2012

**COUNTY COUNCIL  
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND**

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By: Councilmember Leventhal

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**SUBJECT:** Elimination of the Use of Polystyrene Plates, Cups, and other Foodware in County Government Cafeterias

**Background**

1. Polystyrene is a petroleum-derived plastic-like material used for packaging. The foam form, known as expanded polystyrene (EPS), is commonly used to make disposable plates, cups, bowls and other items.
2. Approximately 1 million tons of polystyrene plates, cups, and other foodware are disposed of in the United States every year.
3. While potentially recyclable as a #6 plastic, polystyrene is not commonly recycled because of food contamination concerns and because polystyrene's high volume to weight ratio complicates transport of the material. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that less than one percent of all polystyrene produced in the United States is recycled.
4. Montgomery County's Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Solid Waste, does not recycle polystyrene because of the lack of stable regional markets for the product and because of the complications noted in Paragraph 3.
5. Environmentally friendly alternatives to the use of polystyrene are available, such as: reusable equipment (trays, cups, and silverware) and the use of paper and other products made from recycled content and which are also compostable, biodegradable and/or recyclable.
6. County residents, businesses, and government all need to be good stewards of the environment. County Government should lead by example with environmental initiatives to affirm the County's commitment to reduce its environmental footprint and to show that viable environmentally-friendly options are available and should be pursued whenever possible.

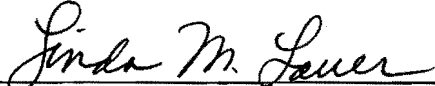
7. The County's Department of General Services has successfully worked with its food service contractors to eliminate the use of polystyrene at its cafeteria sites. These sites are now using recycled paper products for food containers and plates and using clear plastic products for certain wet food items.

**Action**

The County Council for Montgomery County Maryland approves the following resolution:

The Council supports the elimination of polystyrene foodware in County Government cafeterias and encourages other public and private food service facilities to also consider the elimination of the use of polystyrene foodware.

This is a correct copy of Council action.

  
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Linda M. Lauer, Clerk of the Council