
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 6229

AN ACT CONCERNING A REDUCTION OF SINGLE-USE PLASTICS AND POLYSTYRENE WASTE.

SUMMARY

Beginning July 1, 2027, this bill generally bans the sale, use, purchase, and provision of certain polystyrene foodware and packaging products and single-use plastic straws, stirrers, and sticks by certain entities. The prohibition applies to businesses, state and municipal agencies, schools, vendors with government contracts, and licensed food vendors (including restaurants, food trucks, cafeterias, and other establishments selling or distributing prepared food and drinks). The bill requires pharmacies and medical facilities to make biodegradable or compostable single-use plastic straws available and allows other businesses and entities to provide these straws on request, including to someone with a disability.

Beginning January 1, 2027, the bill requires state and municipal buildings, including schools, required to contain drinking fountains to (1) install and maintain an equal number of bottle-filling stations when undertaking a capital project or replacing drinking fountains and (2) ensure the bottle-filling stations remain publicly accessible and functional. It requires the Department of Administrative Services to set compliance guidelines for these requirements.

Lastly, the bill creates a nine-member task force to study the reduction of single-use plastics in the state and requires it to report its findings and recommendations to the Environment Committee by February 1, 2026. The task force ends on that date or when it submits its report, whichever is later.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2027, except the refilling station provision is effective January 1, 2027, and the task force provision is effective upon

passage.

BAN ON CERTAIN POLYSTYRENE AND SINGLE-USE PLASTIC PRODUCTS

Applicable Products

Beginning July 1, 2027, the bill generally prohibits the businesses and government entities listed above from selling, using, buying, or providing the following products:

1. single-use foodware containing polystyrene (i.e. any synthetic polymer material commonly used to manufacture disposable foodware);
2. packaging products made of polystyrene (e.g., packing peanuts); and
3. single-use plastic straws, plastic stirrers, splash sticks, and foodware accessories.

Exception for Specified Packaging Products

The bill's prohibition does not apply to packaging products made of polystyrene or containing polystyrene loose fill that is:

1. for prepackaged food that was filled and sealed before the business received it;
2. for raw or frozen meat or seafood sold from a butcher case or similar retail appliance;
3. a cooler or ice chest, as long as the polystyrene is fully encased in another material; or
4. a reusable polystyrene for agricultural use.

Enforcement and Penalties

The Consumer Protection and Energy and Environmental Protection departments must develop and implement an enforcement plan for the ban that includes (1) educational outreach to provide guidance and resources to businesses and institutions on transitioning to sustainable

alternatives, (2) a fair compliance timeline, and (3) a tiered penalty system.

Under the bill, the penalty for first violations is a written warning and an “attendant assistance period” to comply. (The bill does not specify what constitutes an “attendant assistance period.”) Subsequent violations are subject to a penalty of up to \$250.

The bill states that it does not prohibit municipalities from enacting and enforcing stricter restrictions on polystyrene and single-use plastics (disposable plastic products intended for one-time use, including plastic cutlery, straws, stirrers, splash sticks, and foodware accessories).

SINGLE-USE PLASTICS REDUCTION TASK FORCE

Scope

Under the bill, the task force’s study must do the following:

1. identify sustainable alternatives to single-use plastics;
2. recommend ways to improve processing infrastructure for these products;
3. determine the best methods to support businesses, municipalities, and school systems in adopting circular economy principles; and
4. determine reasonable timeframes for implementing additional single-use plastic reduction requirements.

Task Force Membership and Administration

The task force consists of the DEEP commissioner, or her designee, and the following appointed members:

1. a school nutrition program expert and state business expert, both appointed by the House speaker;
2. a restaurant operations expert and hospital operations expert, both appointed by the Senate president pro tempore;

3. a municipal operations expert, appointed by the House majority leader;
4. a state agency operations expert, appointed by the Senate majority leader; and
5. two members appointed by the House and Senate minority leaders, respectively.

Legislatively appointed members may be state legislators. Appointing authorities must make all initial appointments within 30 days after the bill's passage and fill any vacancies. The House speaker and Senate president must select the task force's chairpersons from its members. The chairpersons must schedule the first meeting of the task force within 60 days of the bill's passage. The Environment Committee's administrative staff serves as that of the task force.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Environment Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 25 Nay 8 (03/24/2025)