

## Plastic Straw Ban Approved Across Los Angeles County

The LA city and county leaders approved a plan for reducing pollution caused by straws with a goal of phasing them out entirely.

By [Paige Austin](#) | Dec 4, 2018 12:59 pm ET | Updated Dec 5, 2018 1:04 am ET



LOS ANGELES, CA —Restaurants in much of Los Angeles County will soon be restricted from distributing plastic straws to customers who don't ask for them, with the county Board of Supervisors and Los Angeles City Council both moving ahead with restrictions Tuesday.

The City Council voted 12-0 to direct its attorneys to draft an ordinance that would ban all restaurants in the city from automatically distributing plastic straws to customers, beginning on Earth Day in April. Under the proposal, straws could only provided to customers who specifically ask for them.

The law aims go further than a recent statewide ban that prevents restaurants from automatically serving straws. In additional to making straws available only upon request, the city is looking at the possibility of banning them all together by 2021. The goal is to reduce the waste and pollution created by disposable straws, but city officials have yet to find a way to ban straws without impacting people with disabilities, who require straws to eat or drink. The council is slated to vote on the proposal Tuesday.

<https://patch.com/california/pacificpalisades/amp/2/826458/plastic-straw-ban-approved-across-ios-angeles-county>

The motion for the straws-on-request ordinance cites a Los Angeles Times editorial which stated that Americans use -- and almost immediately discard -- up to a half-billion plastic beverage straws each day.

Videos going viral on social media have focused on the harmful effects of single-use straws on marine life.

The council also instructed its the Bureau of Sanitation to report back on the feasibility of phasing out single-use plastic straws by 2021, and to work with the Department of Disability on methods and approaches to mitigate impacts to the disabled community associated with the phase-out.

"The two-year phase-out gives restaurants and bars the time they need to deplete their current inventory of plastic straws, and it gives the industry time to pioneer biodegradable and environmentally friendly alternatives for mass consumption," O'Farrell said.

The county Board of Supervisors, meanwhile, adopted an ordinance similar to the city's, but it will take effect Jan. 3. The county ordinance will apply to all businesses serving food or beverages in unincorporated areas and provides that servers hand out straws only on request. However, businesses that previously distributed straws automatically may ask customers if they want one and then only oblige if customers answer yes.

Violators will be subject to fines of \$25 per day and a maximum of \$300 per year.

More than 100 municipalities statewide have put some restrictions on single-use plastic products. Malibu has banned the use of plastic straws, stirrers and utensils, while Santa Monica has adopted an even broader prohibition that includes plastic plates, trays, cups and other single-use containers that will take effect Jan. 1.

*City News Service and Patch Staffer Paige Austin contributed to this report. Photo: Shutterstock*