

A Summary of Groton Ordinance #293, to Ban Single-Use Plastics in the Town of Groton

Passed by the Groton Town Council, January 7, 2020

The ordinance to ban single-use plastics in the Town of Groton that was passed January 7 on a vote of 8-1 includes the following provisions:

1. It bans the use of single-use plastic carryout bags at the point of check-out in stores in Groton.

It does not ban in-store or "plastic barrier bags" which are used to transport fruits, vegetables, nuts, meat, fish and other in-store items.

"Plastic Carryout Bag" does not include reusable bags, plastic barrier bags or double opening plastic bags (dry-cleaning bags), or plastic bags measuring larger than 28 inches by 36 inches, all of which are allowed.

2. It bans plastic stirrers, such as are used for coffee or tea.

It does not ban plastic cutlery.

3. It bans plastic straws.

It does not ban straws made from non-plastic materials, including, but not limited to, paper, pasta, sugar cane, wood, or bamboo. The ordinance includes a provision that allows businesses to provide a plastic straw if a customer asks for one.

4. It bans polystyrene (brand name "Styrofoam") carry-out containers. These include cups, bowls, plates, trays, and clamshells. It does not ban cup lids containing polystyrene nor other types of polystyrene such as packaging peanuts, box linings for shipping fragile articles, coolers, or egg cartons. The ordinance also bans selling packaged food on polystyrene trays prepared at the store.

Groton businesses may provide reusable bags of fabric or heavy plastic or recyclable/reuseable paper bags to customers either free or for a fee.

The ordinance does not apply to either the City of Groton or Groton Long Point.

The ordinance becomes effective six months after passage by the Town Council, or July 7, 2020. The six-month period has been standard in virtually all of the ordinances passed in Connecticut. The Representative Town Meeting will vote on the ordinance on January 12, 2020.

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