MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT
Eliminating Single-Use Plastic Straws

HB 5385- An Act Requiring the Elimination of Single-Use Plastic Straws

BACKGROUND
Single-use food service items such as plastic straws and stirrers are wasteful, unnecessary, and have impacts on our environment that last for generations. Plastic straws are frequently discarded improperly, and they do not break down once they escape into the environment. Tiny plastic fragments (known as microplastics) from straws and other single-use plastics make up as much as 85% of all the plastic pollution found on shorelines across the world. These microplastics affect more than 250 marine and avian species, and they create a legacy of plastic pollution that devastates our oceans and waterways for generations to come.

JUSTIFICATION
According to the Ocean Conservancy, plastic straws and stirrers are the 7th most common type of plastic ocean pollution collected at beach cleanup activities worldwide. The good news is that plastic straws are an unnecessary disposable item for which there are cost effective, environmentally friendly alternatives. A single reusable straw can be used hundreds of times, virtually eliminating the need for wasteful plastic straws.

SUMMARY OF PROVISIONS

- Prohibits any full-service food service establishment from providing a single-use plastic straw, unless specifically requested by the consumer;

- Requires the proprietor or any food service establishment found in violation of the law to be served two written warnings. Upon the third violation, the proprietor would be fined 25 dollars a day, not to exceed three hundred dollars a year;

- Allows municipalities to pass stricter requirements on single-use plastic straws than those prescribed at the state level.