

## Highlights

- Unnecessary accessories waste money, and they harm the planet and local communities.
- We can solve foodware accessory waste with legislation.
- Customers should only be served straws, utensils, condiment packets, and other accessories when they ask for them.
- Food delivery apps, online delivery platforms, and restaurants should include these accessories on the menu and provide them only if requested.

## Fact Sheet:

# Why we need to #SkipTheStuff

Every year, billions of straws, utensils, napkins, condiment packets, and other items that customers don't want or need are included in take-out and delivery orders.

### **#SkipTheStuff legislation can change this.**

Voluntary action by restaurants and delivery companies is helpful, but every year new restaurants and online ordering apps launch without the "upon request" option. #SkipTheStuff is simple, saves restaurants money, and reduces unnecessary waste.



## Unnecessary accessories waste money



Restaurants spend \$24 billion a year on disposable items.<sup>1</sup>



Local business and governments spend \$6 billion annually managing the waste and cleaning up the litter.<sup>2</sup>

## And they harm the planet and local communities



**Ocean plastic.** 23 million metric tons of plastic waste enters the ocean annually – the U.S. is the biggest source.<sup>3</sup>



**Waste.** 1 trillion disposable food service items are used every year in the U.S., creating 9 million tons of waste.<sup>4</sup>



**Environmental justice.** Production of plastic emits greenhouse gases and harms communities near oil and plastic production and waste incineration facilities.<sup>5</sup>



**Disposable utensils.** More than 36 billion are used every year in the United States. Put end to end, they would wrap around the Earth 139 times.<sup>6</sup>



**Straws and stirrers** are the 3rd most common beach litter items during International Coastal Cleanup.<sup>7</sup> Americans use as much as 142 billion straws each year.<sup>8</sup>



**Napkins** and other paper products come from trees and require significant water to produce. Cutting trees propels the climate crisis and destroys habitat, in the midst of the planet's 6 mass extinction of species.

## BUT we can solve this with #SkipTheStuff legislation.

Customers should only be served straws, utensils, condiment packets, and other accessories when they ask for them.

Food delivery apps, online delivery platforms, and restaurants should include these accessories on the menu and provide them only if requested.

If you need it, you can get it. And if you don't need it, there is no need to waste.

**Take action in your community to pass #SkipTheStuff legislation.**

Skip the Stuff is a national policy initiative launched through Upstream's National Reuse Network. For more information, visit [bit.ly/skipthestuff](https://bit.ly/skipthestuff).

## Endnotes

- 1 Upstream (2021), [Reuse Wins: The environmental, economic, and business case for transitioning from single-use to reuse in food service](#)
- 2 Upstream (2021), Reuse Wins.
- 3 Borrelle, S., Ringma, et al., (2020) Predicted Growth in Plastic Waste Exceeds Efforts to Mitigate Plastic Pollution, *Science* 18, 369: 6510, 1515–1518
- 4 Upstream (2021), Reuse Wins.
- 5 CIEL, Upstream, et al (2019) Plastic and Health: The Hidden Costs of a Plastic Planet
- 6 Sietsema, Tom, “All my takeout has delivered a mountain of trash. So I asked experts how to minimize it,” *Washington Post* – Sept. 2020.
- 7 The Ocean Conservancy (2019) *The Beach and Beyond ICC Final Report*.
- 8 Niraj, Chokshi, “[How a 9-Year-Old Boy’s Statistic Shaped a Debate on Straws.](#)”