
Sept. 11, 2018

The Honorable Ted Wheeler
Mayor, City of Portland
1221 SW Fourth Avenue, Suite 340
Portland, Oregon 97204

Dear Mayor Wheeler:

As Greater Portland's chamber of commerce, the Portland Business Alliance represents more than 1,900 small, medium and large businesses throughout the metro region. We understand the city is considering a single-use disposable plastic policy, with a focus on plastic straws. The Alliance is ready to partner with the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability to assist the impacted businesses during this transition to more sustainable practices.

The Alliance is aware that the potential ordinance currently under consideration differs from the June council decision that directed city staff to develop a conditional ban on single-use plastics, with an emphasis on plastic straws. We understand that the current conversation has moved from a potential ban to a "by-request" policy, with broader implications beyond just straws. With regard to straws, in particular, the Alliance urges the city to consider the impacts the new policy may have on hospitals treating critical care patients and disabled communities reliant on straws and other single-use plastics for nutrition and medical needs. It is essential these populations are not adversely impacted or stigmatized.

Should further steps be taken or the policy expanded beyond straws, impacted businesses must have additional opportunities to weigh in. For example, consideration must be given to an exemption for large event venues that currently utilize compostable plastics but for whom reusable dishware is not a viable alternative. In addition, small restaurants and to-go only establishments may lack the space or ability to use reusable dishware.

This effort to reduce the use of disposable plastics is an important step toward achieving a more sustainable future, and many businesses are actively engaged in research and technology advances to help address the environmental impacts of disposable plastics. The Alliance urges the city to consult these businesses as their work continues to ensure a durable policy that meets the city's goals, establishes a clear and practical implementation plan and takes into account market-based opportunities. We look forward to staying engaged throughout the process. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this community issue.

Sincerely,



Dave Robertson
Chair, board of directors

cc: Portland City Council; Susan Anderson, Director, Bureau of Planning and Sustainability;
Katherine Schultz, Chair, Planning and Sustainability Commission

