



A STUDENT-CENTERED VISION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

To: New Jersey Institutions of Higher Education
From: The Office of the Secretary of Higher Education
Subject: Reminder: Plastic bag ban effective May 4, 2022
Date: April 6, 2022

On Nov. 4, 2020, Governor Phil Murphy signed into law [P.L. 2020, c. 117](#), which prohibits the use of single-use plastic carryout bags in all stores and food service businesses statewide and single-use paper carryout bags in grocery stores that occupy at least 2,500 square feet. The law also bans the use of polystyrene foam food service products.

This law becomes fully effective on **May 4, 2022** and will affect institutions of higher education (IHEs) throughout the State.

Ban on Single-Use Carryout Bags

In relevant part, this law bans the provision or sale of all single-use plastic carryout bags. The ban will apply to the following locations on IHE campuses: bookstores, coffee shops, convenience stores, delicatessens and similar to-go food locations, food trucks and carts, and dining halls/cafeterias.

The only bags permitted for use by campus locations affected by this ban are reusable bags that:

1. Are made of polypropylene fabric, PET non-woven fabric, nylon, cloth, hemp product, or other washable fabric; and
2. Have stitched handles (either thread or ultrasonic, T-Shirt bags are permitted); and
3. Are designed and manufactured for at least 125 reuses.

Ban on Polystyrene Foam Food Service Products

In relevant part, this law also prohibits all food service businesses (such as those campus locations listed above) from selling/providing any food served in a polystyrene foam food service product.

A "polystyrene foam food service product" is defined as a product made, in whole or in part, of polystyrene foam that is used for selling or providing a food or beverage, and includes but is not limited to a food container, plate, hot or cold beverage cup, meat or vegetable tray, cutlery, or egg carton. A narrow list of exemptions can be found [here](#).

Ban on Single-use Plastic Straws

As a reminder, as of November 4, 2021, food service businesses are only permitted to provide a single-use plastic straw to a customer upon request by the customer.

Violations

Please note that an entity that violates the law shall be subject to a warning for the first offense, may be fined up to \$1,000 per day for the second offense, and up to \$5,000 per day for the third and subsequent offenses. Violations of a continuing nature constitute an additional, separate, and distinct offense for each day that is deemed a violation.

For additional information and resources regarding this law, please visit the [Department of Environmental Protection's website](#).