



Reusable Food Ware Strategies

**Green Purchasing Roundtable,
March 2023**



Alameda County
SUSTAINABILITY
Local Action, Global Impact.

Welcome! Introduce Yourself

- Click on Google Doc link in chat
- Find or enter your organization on slides 3-7
- Add your name and favorite finger food
- Scroll to view your colleagues on the line!



Agenda

- *Welcome*
- ***Strategies and Trends in Usable Food Ware in Municipal Operations – Justin Lehrer, StopWaste (20 minutes)***
- *Breakout Groups*
- *Q&A*
- ***Sustainable Purchasing Guide for Disposable Food Ware – Stacey Foreman and Karl Bruskotter, Sustainable Procurement Advisors (5 minutes)***
- *Breakout Groups*
- *Evaluations and Close*

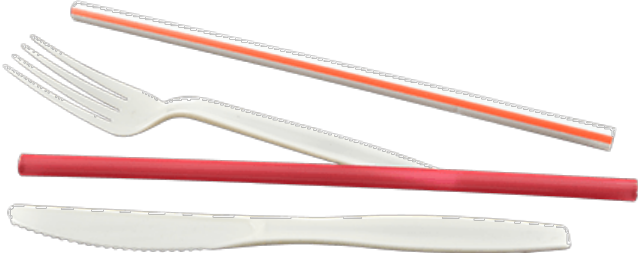


Reusable Foodware Strategies for Local Government

Justin Lehrer
Green Purchasing Roundtable
March 23, 2023



Single -Use Foodware



Multiple Considerations

Waste Reduction

- Reduce single-use plastics to address litter/pollution/shift towards reusables

Proper Recycling

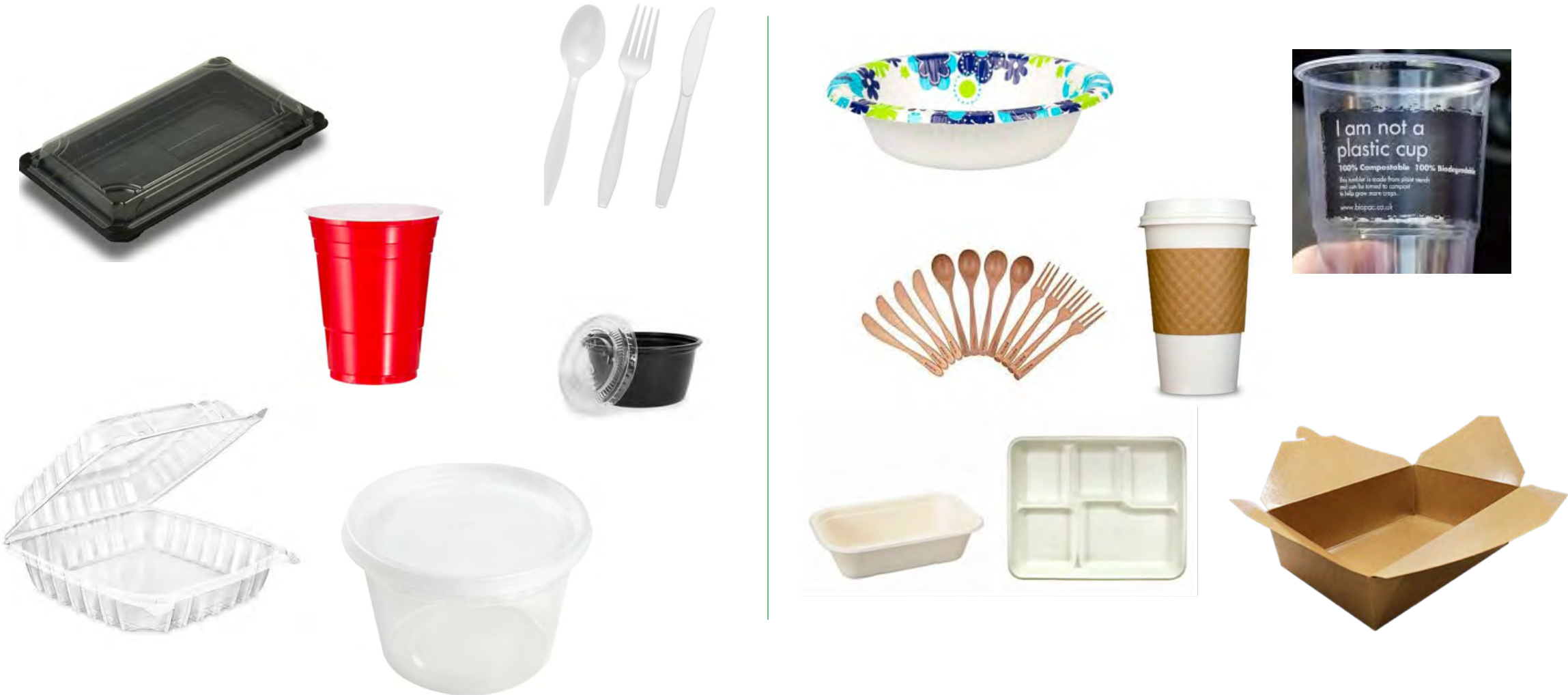
- Maximize recycling/composting of discarded foodware
- Avoid landfill and contamination of compost

Toxics Reduction

- Eliminate perfluorinated compounds
- Keep compost (and food cycle) clean



But Take -out Packaging is Recyclable/Compostable, Right?



Challenges with “Recyclable”

Foodware



Most are not actually recyclable
Tend to end up in the wrong bin
Typically tossed with too much food residue

Possible contamination from
fines



Compostables : Not a Panacea

Most “bioplastics” don’t actually decompose

Plastic film contaminates compost

Unhealthy ingredients: PFAS

Polluting production

High cost



Will it Compost?



Are compostables the solution?

Fiber-based compostable foodware:

- Thin layer of film plastic
“poly-coated paper”

>leads to micro-plastics in soil and water

- Grease barriers with perfluorinated compounds

>persist in environment and bioaccumulate in living organisms



Purchasing Compostable Foodware

- New version in development
- Best: REUSE!
- Acceptable: BPI certified fiber-based compostable
- Avoid: Plastics (all of 'em!)
- Input welcome

Purchasing Compostable Food Service Ware **STOP WASTE**
at home & at school

Making good choices when purchasing food service ware products can be quite complicated. That's because not all food ware marketed as "compostable" gets composted at the large-scale commercial composting facilities that process our county's food scraps and food-soiled paper. Many factors play a role, including the ability to distinguish compostable and non-compostable food ware, the food ware item's thickness as well as time spent going through the composting process.

While molded paper/fiber products generally break down, some other products—even if certified by the Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI)—may decompose only partially or not at all. This guide aims to assist you in selecting the best single-use compostable products currently available when reusable food ware is not an option.

Preferred

- Molded natural fiber/paper products
- Uncoated or coated with BPI-certified* film
- Wood-based chopsticks and flatware, such as "birchware"

Okay

- BPI-certified* compostable plastics
- Paper products coated with non-compostable plastic film
- BPI-certified* flatware

Avoid

Avoid products that are NOT labeled BPI certified and/or carry unsubstantiated claims. These claims DO NOT mean compostable:

- Made from plants
- Green
- Environmentally friendly
- Biodegradable
- Degradable
- Will decompose
- Photodegradable
- Made from corn starch
- Bio-based

Reusable service ware is best!

Before you shop for compostable products, please consider durable, reusable dishes and flatware where possible.

For example, offer disposable service ware only for "to-go" orders.

*** BPI CERTIFIED**

Look for this logo to know if the product you are purchasing has been tested and certified by the Biodegradable Products Institute.

Single Use is not the Ideal Solution



But There is a Better Way...

Reusable Foodware Systems



Take-out and delivery



Mobile dishwashing



Institutional kitchens,
campuses, bulk meals

StopWaste Assistance

- Pilot Projects
- Technical Assistance
- Outreach and Education
- Model Ordinance



THERE'S A BETTER WAY THAN THROW-AWAY

Make the Switch to Reusables



Sacred Wheel in Oakland now saves o

Saves Money

LIMITED TIME OFFER

Up to \$2,500 in Fr
and free hands-on



StopWaste and Rethink Disposables are teaming up to help Oakland businesses switch to reusable foodware.

- Better for you**
Data shows that reusables save businesses money, even when accounting for labor and water expenses.
- Better for your customers**
Food tastes better on real plates and attracts guests that want planet-friendly options.
- Better for the planet**
Reusables save water and reduce litter and pollution in the environment.



"The Rethink Disposable Team helped me choose and order reusable foodware that's right for me and even delivered it. All at no cost to me."

*Leena Lim, Owner
Malaya Tea Room, Alameda*

Free reusable foodware and hands on support available now!

We handle the research, purchasing, delivery and set up. Assistance is available to a limited number of businesses on a first-come first-served basis.

→ www.StopWaste.org/rethink



SCAN TO APPLY

Reusable Foodware is Safe and Encouraged!

A COVID-19 UPDATE
FOR ALAMEDA COUNTY RESTAURANTS

STOP WASTE
Sustainable • Green • Community

Reusable Foodware is Safe, Allowed, and Encouraged!

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a steep increase in the use of disposable foodware. The Alameda County Department of Environmental Health, consistent with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, allows the use of reusable foodware when properly washed, stored, and sanitized. Stop/Waste encourages the use of reusable whenever possible to reduce cost, waste, litter, and improve the dining experience.

Providing Reusables for Onsite Dining is Allowed

- For both indoor or outdoor dining, reusable dishes, cups, and utensils are safe for workers and customers, as long as they're properly washed, stored, and sanitized.
- Items shared between customers, such as menus, bread baskets, and condiment bottles, should be disinfected between parties to effectively decrease the virus.

Customer-Provided Reusables are Encouraged

- Reusable bags, utensils, containers, and cups from customers are safe and allowed by health code, as long as staff are not required to touch them.
- Offering complimentary pours of beverages into customer-provided beverage containers is safe and encouraged.

Reduce Waste from Take-out Service

- Provide legal-size items such as bags, utensils, napkins, straws, condiment packets, and liners by request only.
- Encourage customers to hand carry to-go orders without a bag or to use their own reusable bags. Reinforce the Recycle Bin Ordinance in Alameda County is in effect.
- If disposable food service was your only option, select compostable items certified by the Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI).

For more information on reusable and compostable foodware options, visit www.StopWaste.org/reusablefoodware

Need Help? Assistance and Funding Available:

\$500 Rebates for Reusable Food Service Ware
Does your business currently use disposable food service ware to reduce things? Consider reusable alternatives with a mini grant up to \$500 per location on account offered by Stop/Waste. For details and to apply, visit www.StopWaste.org/mini-grant-rebates

Reusable Food Service Ware Pilot Projects
Stop/Waste is working with local business and Alameda County to test and support reusable service ware options for prepared food takeout and delivery managed by third-party providers. Interested in participating? Learn more at www.StopWaste.org/reusable-food

This pattern was developed by Stop/Waste in consultation with the Alameda County Department of Environmental Health



Approved by Alameda County
Department of Environmental Health

Model Ordinance – The Big Picture

Goal: Reduce consumption of single-use items!

- Reuse First
- Comprehensive and Innovative
- Modular / Customizable
- Applicable to government operations



Reusables – Required for dine -in, BYO Always Allowed

- Reusable foodware required for all dine-in establishments
- Waivers available (dishwashing capacity) but expire in the event of a remodel.
- Must accept customer-provided reusables (BYO)
- Vendors operating on City property must comply as well as leases, contracts, etc.





Disposable Cup and Container Charge

- Charge for cups only, or add containers
- \$0.25/disposable item, up to \$1.00
- Alternative: \$0.25 flat charge
- \$0.25 discount for customer BYO
- Business keeps the money
- Includes takeout order/delivery platforms



Compliant Disposable Food Ware

- Free of toxins
- Compostable (including plastics)
- Compostable (fiber only)
- Recyclable
- No retail sales of noncompliant foodware
- Rely on 3rd party certifications
 - BPI
 - Green Screen Certified



Accessories Only Upon Request

- Accessories: utensils, napkins, condiment packets, cup sleeves/tops
- Disposables only provided upon request, for take out
- Condiments from bulk dispensers or reusable containers
- Medical exemption upon request
- No bundling!
- Airports exempt, City property is not



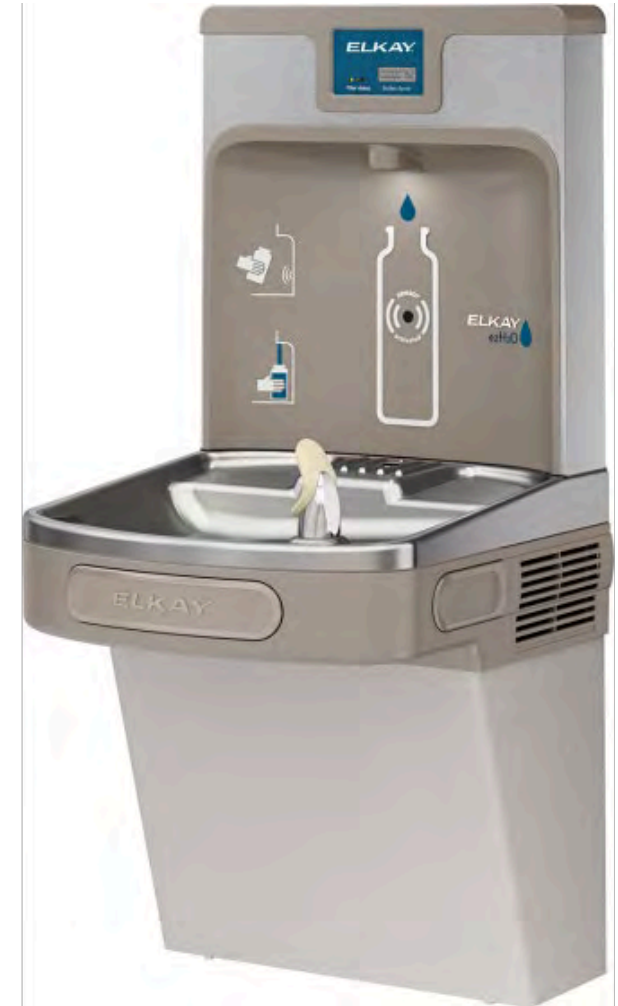
Reusables for City Facilities

- Reusable cups for internal operations/use (or BYO)
- Includes concessions at city facilities (parks, beaches, snack bars, cafes)
- Indoors or outdoors



Packaged Water Policies

- City purchase, sale, distribution of disposable water bottles prohibited (internally or at events/activities)
- Water Bottle refill stations available at city facilities, on City property, and at large venues



Polystyrene

- **No sale of polystyrene items:**
 - Packing peanuts
 - Styrofoam coolers
 - Pool or Beach toys unless encapsulated
 - Docks/water equipment unless encapsulated
 - Meat, produce trays, egg cartons



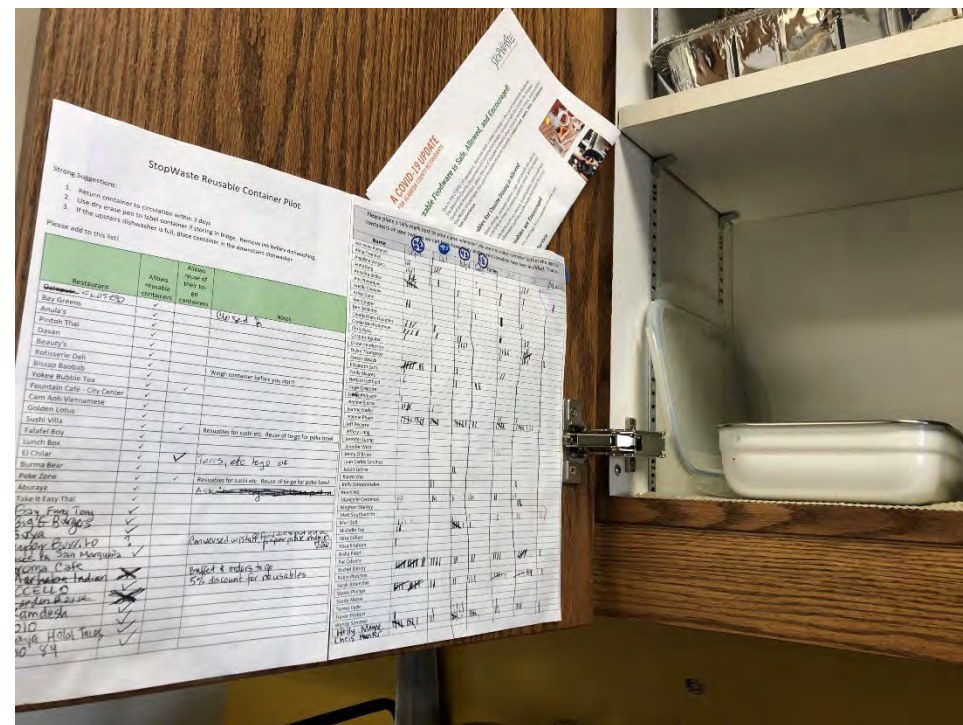
Reusable Cups at Large Venues and Events

- Reusable cups for all non-packaged beverages sold
- Attendees can BYO
- Events: at least 25% reusables, ramps up to 50%
- Tracking/Reporting requirement



Embedding Reusables in your Operations – Breakrooms and Beyond...

- Break-rooms – supply reusables only
 - Dishwashing available?
- Supply to-go containers for staff use
- Policy for meetings and events (internal and external/permitted)
- Approved caterers that use reusables
- City-owned properties
 - Cafes, Parks, Beaches – concessionaires, leasees



Sharing from the group: *Examples of reusables in action*

City of San Rafael example

- Dishwasher in breakroom
 - Staff are able to run
 - Janitors trained to run it every Friday; empty on Mondays (or ID staff champ to do so)
- Set of 300 forks, knives and spoons
 - Special baskets for dishwasher mean all can be cleaned in one load
 - Staff sets up and collects bucket



Alameda County example

- Green & Healthy Meetings and Events – certification for county events
 - Special checklists for events with food
 - “Reduce where you can”: Finger food
 - Champions brought all dishes from home



Learn more:

https://www.acgov.org/sustain/documents/AlamedaCo_Roundtable_EmplEngagement_June2016.pdf
or email sarah.church@acgov.org

Sharing from the group: *Examples of reusables in action*

First Breakouts

*Select a breakout – “Cities” or
“Counties and Others”*

Try to make them equal in number



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Q&A

See our resources:

www.stopwaste.org/reusablefoodware



Sustainable Purchasing Guide for Disposable Food Ware

Stacey Foreman and Karl Bruskotter,
Sustainable Procurement Advisors



Alameda County

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Local Action, Global Impact.

Food Ware SPG

Sustainable Purchasing Guide

Single-Use Food Service Ware



Use this Guide When Purchasing

- Disposable food service ware items including cold and hot cups, plates and bowls, takeout containers and trays, lids, cutlery, straws and stirrers and napkins
- Catering services
- Event/meeting planning services

While food service ware may not be the first thing you think of when planning an event, being thoughtful about how food and beverages are served can support reducing waste and exposure to toxic chemicals, among other sustainability goals. As part of your planning, first assess whether reusables are available and practical for the application. If disposables are necessary, be sure to also check with your hauler/composter/facility ahead of time regarding what types of items they accept.



How to Purchase

Check with your central procurement office or administrative staff to find out if you have any contracts that employees are required to use to purchase food service ware. When seeking these products in a store or online, check the product details to confirm the product meets the Minimum Requirements listed below.

Product Requirements- *specify or seek:*

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS/SPECIFICATIONS	LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Styrofoam™ or expanded polystyrene containers • No plastic straws, stirrers, or lid plugs (<i>paper straws, wooden stirrers are acceptable</i>) • Paper-based food service ware & napkins contain a minimum 30% post-consumer recycled content (<i>see related SB 1383 reporting requirements on page 2</i>) • Paper-based food service ware items are uncoated (<i>i.e. no plastic- or wax-lined paper plates, cups, etc.</i>) • Molded-fiber and compostable plastic food service ware meet one of the following certifications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BPI, CMA, or Vincotte OK Compost <p><i>(Note: only purchase/use compostable plastic if your composter accepts it)</i></p>	<p><i>Minimum Requirements plus one or more of the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GreenScreen certified • Paper-based food service ware is unbleached or labeled processed chlorine free (PCF) • Napkins are Green Seal, UL ECOLOGO or FSC certified (FSC "Recycled" or "Mix")



SB 1383 Reporting Requirements

Coordinate with your agency's SB 1383 lead to maintain required documentation, including:

- Records verifying the minimum recycled content of the paper products
- Invoices or order forms that include paper type and volume details
- Applicable documentation if compliant products are not available or are cost-prohibitive

Ecolabels to Look For



Related Tips

To reduce waste:

- Understand before you purchase the composting and recycling options available at the event facility.
- If using all reusables is not feasible, consider a hybrid approach that targets reusables for some items, such as water pitchers, platters, serving and/or individual utensils, and allows disposables for the remaining items.
- Encourage participants to bring their own reusable mugs, water bottles, and/or utensils.

Benefits

Using reusables when you can:

- Saves money vs. repeat disposable purchases for reoccurring events.
- Reduces potential for wayward litter that ends up harming aquatic life.

BPI, CMA, OK Compost, or GreenScreen certified products:

- Reduces exposure to toxic chemicals commonly found in disposable food service ware products (primarily per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or "PFAS" chemicals).

Additional Resources

- [Avoiding Hidden Hazards: A Purchaser's Guide to Safer Foodware 2019](#)
- [ReThink Disposable](#) - Case studies, infographics, and more!
- Check the [StopWaste Sustainable Purchasing Website](#) for additional implementation resources.

PRODUCT REGISTRIES

Find/verify certified products by using the following online certified product registries:

- [BPI Certified Products](#)
- [CMA Accepted Items](#)
- [GreenScreen Certified Products](#)

Note: There is not an online certified product directory for Vincotte OK Compost products. Instead, look for the OK Compost ecolabel on the product.

ABOUT PFAS CHEMICALS

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, aka "PFAS", are a toxic family of "nonstick" fluorinated chemicals that are ubiquitous in food ware and food packaging. People can ingest PFAS through packaged food and even contaminated drinking water. PFAS are hormone disrupting chemicals that have also been linked to a wide range of adverse health effects.

BPI, CMA, OK Compost or GreenScreen certified products do not contain PFAS.

ABOUT SENATE BILL 1383

SB 1383 ([14 CCR 18993.3 et seq.](#)) set methane emission reduction targets for California, with a focus on reducing organic waste to landfills – a key source of methane emissions. The regulations established purchasing requirements for recycled content paper to ensure strong markets for recovered paper and to keep paper out of landfills.

Product Requirements- *specify or seek:*

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS/SPECIFICATIONS

- No Styrofoam™ or expanded polystyrene containers
- No plastic straws, stirrers, or lid plugs (*paper straws, wooden stirrers are acceptable*)
- Paper-based food service ware & napkins contain a minimum 30% post-consumer recycled content (*see related SB 1383 reporting requirements on page 2*)
- Paper-based food service ware items are uncoated (*i.e. no plastic- or wax-lined paper plates, cups, etc.*)
- Molded-fiber and compostable plastic food service ware meet one of the following certifications:
 - BPI, CMA, or Vincotte OK Compost

(Note: only purchase/use compostable plastic if your composter accepts it)

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Minimum Requirements plus one or more of the following:

- GreenScreen certified
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 - BPI, CMA, or Vincotte OK Compost

(Note: only purchase/use compostable plastic if your composter accepts it)

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Minimum Requirements plus one or more of the following:

- GreenScreen certified
- Paper-based food service ware is certified or labeled processed with 100% post-consumer recycled content (PCF)

Currently challenging to find some products

Green Seal, UL ECOLOGO, FSC "Recycled" or



Second Breakouts
start on slide 17



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Thank You!

Please fill out an evaluation

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