



Environmentalists say single-use plastics pollute the oceans, causing damage to ecosystems.

Photo by [Bo Eide / Flickr](#)

Bal Harbour Village to Ban Single-Use Plastics Beginning in October

JESSICA LIPSCOMB | APRIL 25, 2019 | 8:16AM

There's really no valid argument against the idea that single-use plastics are ruining the planet. About 40 percent of plastic products are used only once, and as a result, almost 700 species have been harmed by this trash, **according to *National Geographic***. The European Union **recently banned ten types of single-use plastic items**, including polystyrene cups, citing reports that 80 percent of marine litter is made of the stuff.

In South Florida, Bal Harbour will take a similar approach. Last week, the village council voted unanimously **to ban most single-use plastics**, including straws, utensils, and shopping bags.

"This is something that I don't think anyone's doing across the state... so we're feeling our way through and seeing what the reaction is and how it works," Mayor **Gabe Groisman** said at the April 16 council meeting where the vote took place. "We actually don't know how it's gonna fly, but we think it's the right kind of statement to make."

The ordinance prohibits the use, sale, or distribution of single-use plastics in commercial establishments, including restaurants, hotels, retail stores, and condo and apartment buildings. Officials in Bal Harbour, a ritzy, oceanfront community best known for its luxury shopping mall, say they crafted the regulations to address plastic pollution in public areas.

"Bal Harbour Village is a major and internationally recognized tourist destination that continues to encounter discarded plastic items on the Village's beaches, waterways, and streets, as a result of the improper disposal of these single-use plastic items," **a council memo states**.

The ban comes as the Florida Legislature debates bills that would preempt municipalities such as Bal Harbour **from prohibiting plastics**. Councilman Buzzy Sklar says he recently visited Tallahassee to talk to lawmakers, who suggested it was "very favorable that [Bal Harbour's] ordinance will stand up." The village's attorney has also crafted the ordinance in such a way that it can be amended to abide by state law.

As currently written, the warning period for the ban begins October 1. On December 1, businesses that flout the rules will be fined \$250 per infraction. Individuals can be fined \$25 per infraction.

In addition to applying to commercial establishments, the ordinance also pertains to all Bal Harbour-owned facilities and village-approved events. A person who books a pavilion at a village park for a birthday party, for example, could be fined for using plastic utensils, but a person on a spontaneous picnic would not.

The law makes exceptions for medical and dental offices, as well as for schools.

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