

President, Board of Supervisors
District 5



City and County of San Francisco

LONDON N. BREED

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Board of Supervisors President London Breed Introduces Toughest Styrofoam Ban Law in the Country

SAN FRANCISCO— Board of Supervisors President London Breed today introduced legislation to create the most expansive Styrofoam prohibitions in the country including a ban on the sale of Styrofoam: 1) cups, plates, clamshells, meat trays, egg cartons, and other food ware; 2) packing materials, including packing peanuts; 3) coolers; 4) pool and beach toys; and 5) dock floats, buoys, and other marine products, as well as a ban on the use of Styrofoam packing material for items packaged in San Francisco.

“Three days before we celebrate the 47th Earth Day, I am excited to introduce some of the strongest environmental protection legislation in the country,” said President Breed. “We are a city prized for our natural beauty, surrounded by water on three sides. We have a moral, a public health, and frankly a financial responsibility to protect ourselves from pollutants like polystyrene foam.*”

Polystyrene cannot be recycled through San Francisco’s blue bin recycling collection program and essentially never decomposes. It is a significant source of litter on land and one of the most egregious elements of rising plastic pollution in the Bay and ocean.

Polystyrene breaks down into smaller, non-biodegradable pieces that seabirds often mistake for fish eggs. And unlike harder plastics, polystyrene contains a chemical used in its production called “styrene” that is metabolized after ingestion and threatens the entire food chain, including humans who eat contaminated marine wildlife. Styrene is linked to cancer and developmental disorders, and according to the US FDA, it leaches into food and drink from polystyrene food ware.

“The science is clear: this stuff is an environmental and public health pollutant, and we have to reduce its use,” said President Breed. “There are ample cost effective alternatives to Styrofoam on the market.”

More than 100 US cities have ordinances restricting polystyrene food service ware and/or packaging materials. San Francisco itself has prohibited serving food in polystyrene since 2007. President Breed’s legislation is the next step, covering new uses that have never been regulated in other cities.

“San Francisco will once again be at the forefront,” said President Breed. “We will replace hazardous products with compostable, recyclable ones. We will continue our work toward Zero Waste. And we will protect the public health and the natural beauty of our waterways and wildlife.”

President Breed worked closely with the San Francisco Department of the Environment, the nonprofit Sustainable San Francisco, the California Grocers Association, San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, as well as many local and international businesses. The legislation is designed to help businesses comply and accommodate those who cannot yet.

**Styrofoam is actually a brand name for polystyrene foam.*