

**ORDINANCE NO. 2024-XX**

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LOS ALTOS AMENDING THE LOS ALTOS MUNICIPAL CODE, BY ADDING CHAPTER 6.42 ENTITLED "REGULATIONS ON DISPOSABLE FOODWARE"**

**WHEREAS**, the production, consumption and end of life management of Disposable Foodware, typically used for only a few minutes before being discarded, have significant environmental impacts including substantial greenhouse gas emissions, litter, marine pollution, environmental contamination, harm to wildlife, the depletion of precious natural resources, decrease of biodiversity, and the generation of hard-to-manage waste.

**WHEREAS**, disposable Foodware substantially contributes to hard-to-recycle wastes. Packaging comprises 27% of California's disposed waste stream annually. The generation of municipal solid waste in 1960 was just 2.68 pounds per person per day in California and reached 4.9 pounds per person per day in 2018, the last time EPA reported generation rates. In 2018, 28% of municipal solid waste disposed of in the U.S. was packaging.

**WHEREAS**, every year, about 8 million tons of plastic waste escape into the oceans from coastal nations. That's the equivalent of dumping the contents of one garbage truck into the ocean every minute. Research indicates that as of 2015, there were over 150 million tons of plastics in the ocean. If plastic inputs are not significantly curtailed, the ocean will contain 3 times more plastic by weight than fish by 2025. Over 900 species of marine wildlife have been impacted by plastic ingestion and entanglement.

**WHEREAS**, each year in California and globally, during International Coastal Cleanup Day, seven of the top ten littered items collected on beaches and shorelines are Disposable food and beverage packaging. Almost all of them are plastic.

**WHEREAS**, plastic may last for hundreds and even thousands of years, and has broad, long-lasting negative impacts. Plastics are persistent and accumulating dramatically in oceans worldwide. Scientists document a complex toxicology of plastic micro- and nano- particles in marine life that transfers up the food chain, including to people.

**WHEREAS**, packaging, including Foodware, is a primary user of virgin materials and resources. 55% of paper produced each year is used for packaging. Paper production is responsible for 3 billion trees logged in the U.S. each year, which causes loss of habitat and biodiversity, results in sedimentation of streams, and reduces the availability of trees to capture CO2 from the atmosphere.

**WHEREAS**, the growth of plastics production in the past 65 years has substantially outpaced any other manufactured material. 42% of non-fiber plastics produced are used for packaging and 60% of all plastics produced between 1950 and 2015 were landfilled or entered the environment. Half of all global plastic production is for single-use applications.

**WHEREAS**, reducing the production and disposal of plastic is essential to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It is estimated that in 2019 alone the global production and incineration of plastic produced more than 850 million metric tons of greenhouse gasses—equal to the emissions from 189 five-hundred-megawatt coal power plants.

**WHEREAS**, disposable Foodware poses numerous threats to human health. Over 12,000 chemicals are used in food packaging and other materials that contact food. Many are known to cause cancer, endocrine disruption, chronic diseases and other illnesses in people, and to harm aquatic and terrestrial

ecosystems. Many of the most toxic chemicals used in Disposable Foodware migrate into food and beverages.

**WHEREAS**, disadvantaged and low-income communities are disproportionately impacted by the human health and environmental impacts of toxic chemicals in Disposable Foodware, plastic pollution, and fossil fuel extraction.

**WHEREAS**, requiring the use of 100% Reusable Foodware for onsite dining and take-out food service in urban cities in the U.S. is estimated to achieve an 86% reduction in Disposable Foodware, equal to 841 billion Foodware items eliminated, 7.5 million tons of waste avoided, \$5 billion in net savings for the food service industry for food service operations, \$5.1 billion saved by business and local government in solid waste management costs, and 17 billion pieces of litter prevented. Meanwhile 193,000 local community-based jobs would be created.

**WHEREAS**, in 2021, Governor Newsom signed into law California Assembly Bill (AB) 1276 (codified at Pub. Res. Code, Sections 42270 et seq.) which prohibits food facilities from providing any single-use Foodware Accessories or condiment packages unless requested by the customer.

**WHEREAS**, State law allows customers to provide their own Reusable Beverage Cups and Reusable Food Containers for service, and, consistent with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Alameda County Department of Environmental Health allows the use of Reusable Food Service Ware when properly washed, rinsed, and sanitized.

**WHEREAS**, the proposed ordinance requiring food providers to limit Disposable Food Service Ware is intended to reduce the risk of harm to wildlife and improve water quality in City waterways as required by the Stormwater Permit.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, the City Council of the City of Los Altos does hereby ordain as follows:

**SECTION 1. AMENDMENT OF TITLE 6 OF THE MUNICIPAL CODE.** Chapter 6.42 is hereby added to the Los Altos Municipal Code as set forth in Appendix A to this Ordinance, underline indicates addition, strikethrough indicates deletion.

**SECTION 2. CONSTITUTIONALITY; AMBIGUITIES.** If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, or phrase of this Ordinance is for any reason held to be invalid or unconstitutional, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions hereof. Any ambiguities in the Los Altos Municipal Code created by this Ordinance shall be resolved by the Development Services Director, in their reasonable discretion, after consulting the City Attorney.

**SECTION 3. PUBLICATION.** This Ordinance shall be published as provided in Government Code Section 36933.

**SECTION 4. EFFECTIVE DATE.** This Ordinance shall be effective upon the commencement of the thirty-first day following the adoption hereof.

The foregoing Ordinance was duly and properly introduced at a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Los Altos held on October 22, 2024, and was thereafter, at a regular meeting held on November 12, 2024, passed and adopted by the following vote:

AYES:  
NOES:  
ABSENT:  
ABSTAIN:

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Jonathan D. Weinberg, MAYOR

Attest:

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Melissa Thurman, MMC, CITY CLERK

**APPENDIX A**  
**ADDING CHAPTER 6.42**