

Department of Safety and Inspections

Sustainable “To Go” Food Packaging Project – Municipal Ordinance Comparison

Nationally

Many cities across the U.S. have addressed the issue through outright bans on the use of polystyrene – primarily in coastal states. Others have addressed via ordinances that specifically require “food ware” items to be compostable, recyclable or reusable.

Regionally

Minneapolis – “Green to-go” ENVAP ordinance

Saint Louis Park – “Zero Waste Packaging” ordinance

Saint Paul – Chapter 236

Bans and Exemption Examples

Richmond, CA – Prohibits retail establishments from providing any product composed primarily of polystyrene foam. Exempts food prepared or packaged outside the City, food ware items comprised entirely of aluminum, in emergency situations, and where no suitable alternative.

San Jose, CA – Prohibits food vendors (both local and national) from providing food in polystyrene foam containers. Allows application process for exemption where financial hardship or unique packaging requirements exist.

Santa Monica, CA - Prohibits food providers from dispensing containers made of expanded polystyrene. Allows renewable, one-year exemptions where the food vendor can demonstrate “undue hardship” e.g. economic or no alternative.

Minneapolis, MN – Prohibits food establishments from selling or conveying any food or beverage intended for immediate consumption in packaging which is not environmentally acceptable. Exempts packaging used at hospitals and nursing homes. Exemptions considered where no available alternative, economic consequences or competitive effects exist.

Saint Louis Park, MN – Prohibits food establishments from selling or conveying any food or beverage intended for immediate consumption in packaging which is not zero waste packaging. Exemptions allowed where no available alternative exists.

Enforcement

Most ordinances call for written warning for 1st offense followed by escalating monetary fines for repeated occurrence.