

## Marbletown Passes Plastic Straw Reduction Resolution

### *Resolution is First in New York State to Tackle Plastic Straw Waste*

On Wednesday July 20<sup>th</sup>, the Marbletown Town Board "Straw Free Resolution" passed unanimously, supporting a decrease in disposable plastic straw use.

The resolution positively affirms food establishments which "offer first" before serving single-use plastic straws in or with drinks.

Brigitte Nagle, of [The Spy](#) restaurant, social eatery and bar in High Falls, attended and spoke in favor of the Resolution, adding, "We already stopped using plastic bags for takeout," showing that some restaurants are taking voluntary action on their own to reduce the plastic plague.

Stacy Sindt, co-owner of [The Roost](#) restaurant in Stone Ridge, supported the Resolution and commented the next morning upon hearing it passed, "The Roost is honored to support this Resolution and delighted that it passed, to reduce plastic waste and protect our environment."

Though the resolution does not require restaurants to completely stop using plastic straws, one local restaurant has already taken that step. Scott Albright, owner of [The Last Bite](#) coffeeshop in High Falls, said, "Thank you for the information and opportunity to be a part of this movement. The Last Bite is join the ban and will no longer offer single-use plastic straws at the shop." Albright said a sign made out of plastic straws now reads, "NO PLASTIC," at his café.

Currently 500 million single-use straws are used and thrown away every day in the U.S., according to research based on industry production figures by the national "Be Straw Free" campaign, which believes the 500 million figure to be conservative. That amounts to wrapping the circumference of the earth 2.5 times per day with disposable straws and coffee stirrers.

"The World Economic Forum's report says that by 2050, there will be more plastic than fish by weight in the world's oceans"; said Margot R. Becker, a member of the Marbletown ECC. "In the great plastic gyres in our oceans, the plastic bottles and straws become a broken down soup of tiny plastic particles that look like plankton. Fish, sea animals and birds eat this.

It's just

heartbreaking. And when fish eat plastic, then we do, too. We need to use less plastic. It's not that hard. It's not really a very big sacrifice. We just need to change our habits."

Marbletown Environmental Conservation Commission (ECC) Chair Tom Konrad commented, "Like most Hudson Valley communities, Marbletown's trash is currently hauled 250 miles to the Seneca Meadows landfill near Syracuse, at great cost. By asking customers if they want straws before providing them, local restaurants can cut their costs while reducing waste. As this resolution shows, the idea that all environmental goals require sacrifice is a *straw-man*."

Single-use plastic straws are manufactured with non-renewable resources, have a large cumulative carbon footprint, and add hundreds of thousands of pounds to U.S. landfills daily. Plastics production involves extracting petroleum products, usually using fracking -- unconventional deep drilling in shale rock -- for ethane, a process which harms waterways, climate and health. Plastic straws are among the top 5 most common plastic items found in the oceans, according to NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration). Toxic chemicals -- plasticizers, which are endocrine-disrupting chemicals -- are added to these plastics to make them more pliant. Ingesting plastic increasingly results in illness and death for seabirds, turtles, whales and other marine animals.

A number of Marbletown restaurants, including Kitchinette and Lekker, as well as the three quoted, already minimize single-use plastic straw use; all expressed support for the resolution. "Even a simple decision to not use a straw can have a positive, cumulative environmental impact," said Marbletown ECC Commissioner Iris Marie Bloom, who initiated the Straw Free Resolution.

"We expect that dozens of other municipalities will pass similar resolutions, or stronger ones. This sweet earth, with its amazing waterways and oceans, its generous, life-supporting, threatened climate, is all we have."