



National Environment & Planning Agency

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Website: <http://www.nepa.gov.jm>

Attention: All News Editors

KINGSTON, Jamaica

(13 January 2025):

Distribution and Use of Single-Use Plastic Food Containers Ended

Since January 9, 2025, the distribution and use of single-use plastic food containers have been prohibited. This is the end of the six-month period during which they were allowed.

As such, the importation and use of food boxes made in whole or in part of polyethylene, polypropylene, or polylactic acid are prohibited.

Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation, Hon. Matthew Samuda, says no individual is allowed to import, distribute, manufacture, or sell any of the banned items as from the January 9 deadline.

"The Government is confident that the prior six-months period allowed sufficient time for thorough consultation and sensitisation among private-sector stakeholders and the relevant regulatory authorities, enabling a smooth transition. While the Government remains steadfast and committed to managing the island's waste, we commend those private sector stakeholders who have wholeheartedly embraced the Government's policy position in respect of the management of this non-biodegradable product and has made available to the public the environmentally friendly alternatives".

The Government's policy position on single-use plastics is being proactively pursued to safeguard public health and the environment.

"We encourage the public to consciously purchase environmentally friendly alternatives to single-use plastic packaging. This is important to ensure that we safeguard our health, lives, and livelihoods", says Minister Samuda.

Since 2019, the Government has imposed a ban on the following single-use plastic products:

- Plastic bags, made in whole or in part of polyethylene or polypropylene; and with dimensions not exceeding 610 mm x 610 mm and 0.06 mm thickness,
- Plastic drinking straws,
- Packaging made in whole or in part expanded polystyrene foam, (commonly known as "Styrofoam"), used in the food and beverage industry, and
- Plastic straws attached to juice boxes and drink pouches.

The second category of items in the 4th phase will see a ban on the importation, manufacture, sale, and use of cosmetic care or personal care products to which plastic



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microbeads or microplastics have been intentionally added. These items will be prohibited as of July 1, 2025.

Anyone found guilty of breaching the Order may be fined up to \$50,000 and/or a term of imprisonment not exceeding two years or to both fine and imprisonment pursuant to Section 32 (5) of the Natural Resources Conservation Authority (NRCA) Act. It should be noted that a significant increase in penalties under the NRCA Act is being debated in Parliament and once approved these will be applied.

Breaches involving the importation of single-use plastics will be prosecuted under The Trade (Plastic Packaging Materials Prohibition) Order and if found guilty, the Court may impose a maximum fine of \$2 million and/or a term of imprisonment.

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