



## THE CITY OF KEY WEST

Post Office Box 1409 Key West, FL 33041-1409 (305) 809-3700

MEMORANDUM

**To:** Greg Veliz, City Manager  
Pattie McLauchlin, Assistant City Manager

**From:** John Paul Castro

**Date:** December 30, 2019

**Reference:** RESOLUTION 19-174 DIRECTING THAT THE CITY MANAGER DEVELOP LANGUAGE THAT RESTRICTS THE USE OF SINGLE-USE POLYSTYRENE AND PLASTICS BY INDIVIDUALS ON PUBLIC PROPERTY.

### **Policy:**

**CITY OF KEY WEST, FLORIDA, POLICY PROHIBITING THE USE OF CERTAIN SINGLE-USE PLASTICS ON PUBLIC PROPERTIES, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO, CITY FACILITIES, CITY FACILITIES PROCUREMENT, CITY LEASES, CITY VENDORS, SPECIAL EVENTS PERMITTED BY THE CITY OR THOSE ENGAGED IN A CONTRACTUAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT FOR THE PROVISION OF GOODS OR SERVICES, UNLESS SUCH USE IS OTHERWISE PREEMPTED BY LAW.**

To include Single-use plastics commonly used in food service or product services that are not organic nor readily recyclable nor biodegradable in backyard compost or marine water.

Items including, but not limited to, single-use plastic and polystyrene: straws, bags, plastic “to-go” packaging, and utensils.

To-go type plastic and polystyrene cups can be used only for “to-go” orders not sit-in dining at restaurants, eateries, etc.

All plastics include, but are not limited to; plastic, polystyrene, polymers, bio-polymers, bio-derived and bio-based plastics.

Below is a guide to help determine types of materials not allowed.

Contact the Solid Waste Coordinator for guidance on materials not covered or to apply for an exemption.

### **Guide to identifying plastics**

#### **Definitions:**

*Key to the Caribbean – average yearly temperature 77 ° Fahrenheit.*



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**Degradable**– an items ability to break down.

**Biodegradable**– an items ability to break down and go back to nature, which requires enough heat, moisture, and oxygen. This could take hours or thousands of years depending on the item and the environment.

**Compostable**– composting is an accelerated form of biodegradation in a managed environment, for example a compost facility or at home compost bin, that will provide nutrients back to the earth. Compost facilities compost at a much higher temperature than backyard compost bins.

**Marine Degradable**- a materials ability to completely biodegrade under marine environmental conditions including aerobic marine waters, or anaerobic marine sediments leaving no chemical, plastic, inorganic residue behind.

### **Materials included in the prohibited single-use plastics:**

**Plastic**- material consisting of any of a wide range of synthetic or semi-synthetic organic compounds that are malleable and so can be molded into solid objects.

**Bioplastics**- plastics derived from renewable biomass sources, such as vegetable fats and oils, corn starch, straw, woodchips, food waste, etc. **Bioplastic** can be made from agricultural by-products and/ or from used plastic bottles and other containers using microorganisms.

**Bio-based plastics**– PE, called bio-PET, bio-PP, or bio-PE is same as plastic, just different feedstock. **Not compostable. Not biodegradable. Not marine degradable.**

**Bio-derived plastic**– mixture of plastics and derived from both feedstocks, plants and fossil fuels. **Not compostable. Not biodegradable. Not marine degradable.**

**Biopolymers**– biodegradable plastic. PHA, PLA most common in consumer goods, only considered compostable in industrial compost facility. **Not compostable in backyard compost or the environment. Not biodegradable in backyard compost or the environment. Not marine degradable.**

**Bio-based and bio-derived plastics.** (see above) **Not compostable. Not biodegradable.**

**Oxo-biodegradables**–plastic that is generally plant based and made to decompose quickly. **Not compostable. Not biodegradable. Not marine degradable.**



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### **Background for prohibiting bio-plastics:**

Compostable materials that biodegrade in commercial composting facilities and meet established standards (ASTM D6400 and D6868) are widely available as an alternative for many plastic packaging and food service ware products. While these are a step away from fossil fuel-derived plastics, biopolymers do not perform well in the environment, land or sea, and one of the objectives of this policy is to reduce the amount of plastics littering our environment.

The primary **difference between compostable and biodegradable** is that **compostable** products require a specific environment or conditions to break down, whereas **biodegradable** products break down naturally. Typically **composting** is a faster process, but only under the right conditions.

For example, a **biodegradable plastic bag or plastic straw** in a **compost** pile or in the ocean will not decompose, the temperature won't get hot enough. But **compostable plastic bags and straws** will turn into **compost** over time leaving behind microplastics. If they end up in the stormwater system or marine water, they will still have the same devastating effects that plastic bags have.