



**COUNTY OF MAUI**



## **Did You Know?**

Effective December 31, 2018, polystyrene food service containers will be banned for use, sale or provision in Maui County. The ban will affect Maui County food providers that now serve food or beverages in polystyrene food-service containers, as well as businesses that sell polystyrene food-service products. These businesses will then provide alternative products that are safer for the environment.

### **BANNING POLYSTYRENE PROTECTS WILDLIFE**

Every square mile of ocean hosts over 46,000 pieces of floating plastic; the way it's going now, this number will triple in the next decade. Polystyrene pollution breaks down into smaller, non-biodegradable pieces that are ingested by marine life and other wildlife, thus harming or killing them. As a result of the impacts of marine pollution and adverse effects on marine wildlife, several coastal cities across the United States have also banned the use of polystyrene food packaging.

### **BANNING POLYSTYRENE REDUCES PLASTIC WASTE**

Polystyrene foam is lightweight, floats, and is more likely to be blown from landfills, even when disposed of properly. Sixty to eighty percent of marine debris is polystyrene. These fragments floating through the ocean are a transport mechanism for toxic substances. Other municipalities that have banned polystyrene food containers reported up to 60% less polystyrene litter. While it won't solve all the problems we face with excessive plastic waste, this is a step in the right direction.

### **BANNING POLYSTYRENE COMBATS CLIMATE CHANGE**

Polystyrene releases potent greenhouse gases as it breaks down. Recent studies conducted by the University of Hawaii at Manoa show that methane and ethylene (major contributors to global warming) are emitted as polystyrene breaks down. Even worse, plastics that break down in the ocean emit more of these gases than plastic on land. Once exposed to solar radiation, emission of these gases continue even in the dark... and it takes 500+ years for polystyrene to decompose.

### **YOU CAN REPORT BUSINESSES THAT ARE NOT COMPLIANT**

If a business is distributing polystyrene foam food service containers after December 31, 2018 you can report them to the County of Maui Environmental Protection & Sustainability Division at (808) 270-7880.

**For more info, check out: [mauicounty.gov/foamfree](http://mauicounty.gov/foamfree)**