



COUNCIL OF COMMONWEALTH STUDENT GOVERNMENTS
THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY
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Replacement of Plastic Utensils

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Whereas, *The Council of Commonwealth Student Governments at Pennsylvania State University acknowledges the University's work in reducing plastic use and its impacts on the environment. There are, however, several areas in which plastic use is not as restricted as it could be, specifically regarding plastic utensils in campus cafeterias and dining areas.*

Whereas, The Pennsylvania State University currently produces an estimated 20,000 tons of waste per annum, 67% of which is recycled. Specifically referring to plastics disposal, over two-thirds of Pennsylvania State University’s plastic disposal is discarded rather than recycled or recovered. Additionally, those plastics recovered are done so with the lowest ranking purity out of all seven waste categories (just under 60%).

Whereas, Current plastic utensils are unfit to be recycled or composted due to their size and composition. Plastic utensils must be thrown in general waste bins, which eventually are brought to landfills. In these environments, plastics such as the ones currently in use, can take up to 450 years to decompose. Furthermore, these plastics may break down into microscopic fragments known as microplastic. These microplastic particles are very difficult to detect and, when ingested, can injure or even kill human cells.

Whereas, Firstly, Compostable utensils are often made from plant bio masses, eliminating the need for plastic. Additionally, compostable utensils take significantly less

time to decompose, averaging around three to four months for complete decomposition. Biodegradable utensils are made from polylactic acid (PLA), a degradable form of plastic. They are more readily available and take up to six months to decompose.

Be it resolved, To support the Pennsylvania State University's efforts to enforce and maintain sustainability, The Council of Commonwealth Student Governments at Pennsylvania State University, strongly recommends the implementation of compostable and biodegradable utensils throughout the university, and the commonwealth campuses.

Respectfully,

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Abington's Sustainability Director

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University Park, CCSG Sustainability Director

Council Action

Vote 32 : 4 : 2 Pass: x Fail: _____ Postponed: _____

Presidential Action

Approved: _____ Veto: _____ Date: _____

References

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