



COUNCIL OF COMMONWEALTH STUDENT GOVERNMENTS THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY

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Elimination of Styrofoam Usage Across the Commonwealth

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Whereas, The Council of Commonwealth Student Governments (CCSG) represents the concerns of the students attending the campus in matters of a University-wide nature, as well as those issues impacting the combined interests of the campuses, and

Whereas, Styrofoam “is produced using nonrenewable crude oil.” For every 10,000 Styrofoam cups produced 680 pounds of greenhouse gasses are emitted. In the United States, 3 million tons of Styrofoam is produced;¹

Whereas, The Green Dining Alliance argued that,

- “It is a ‘known hazardous substance’
 - Like all plastics, Styrofoam is a petrochemical; it comes from petroleum, which is known to cause developmental, hematological, renal, and immunological disorders.
- It leaches into food and drink.
 - Especially when paired with liquid and heat, a Styrofoam container’s toxins (like benzene and styrene) seep into the contents. But even with cold or dry food, contact with Styrofoam is unhealthy. A huge portion of our food contains styrene contamination.
- It’s in the air and on your skin.
 - The most common route of exposure to these harmful chemicals is simply inhalation. You also get exposure each time you touch it, since the chemicals can seep into your body through your skin.
- It’s toxic just to make.
 - Its industry ranks the 5th largest creator of toxic wastes in the USA. That includes liquid and solid wastes.
- It’s a ‘principle litter’ – meaning it’s everywhere.
 - Because Styrofoam is so light and crumbles easily, it’s almost too easy for it to end up out in our woods, rivers, and prairies. Once it’s there, it’s there to stay. Styrofoam will break down into microscopic styrenes and other harmful chemicals, and they will linger in the soil and water

¹ <https://naturallysavvy.com/live/important-facts-about-styrofoam/>

for centuries to come. It's an especially serious problem in our world's oceans.

- It still depletes the ozone layer.
 - You may remember the ruckus around banning CFCs in the 90's? Well, Styrofoam now utilizes its chemical cousins instead – which still do harm to the ozone layer. Styrene has a way of evaporating its fumes into the air, which is bad for our lungs as well as the ozone layer that protects us from the sun's cancer-causing rays.
- Just like oil, there are spills.
 - Styrene- and benzene-related illnesses occur in much higher concentrations at spill sites. What's worse, the full effects of exposure to spillage are still unknown.
- Even in landfills, it's not safe.
 - According to the EPA, as styrene leaches from landfills into our drinking water, it causes liver, kidney, or circulatory system problems. Minorities and people living in poverty are more likely to live near landfills and factories, and are disproportionately affected.”, and²

Whereas, “ The nearly 5,000 recycling bins on Penn State’s University Park campus collect all kinds of materials: bottles, cans, paper, but no longer polystyrene, which is often referred to as Styrofoam. The school has recently decided not to recycle polystyrene for a slew of economic reasons, one being the fall of oil prices.”, and³

Be it resolved, The Council of Commonwealth Student Governments’ (CCSG) Sustainability Committee respectfully asks the commonwealth campuses to eliminate the use of Styrofoam.

Be it further resolved, Provided is a list of Styrofoam products that should be replaced with more sustainable products.

- Styrofoam cups; paper, high-grade plastic, or recycled plastics
- Styrofoam plates and bowls; Green2Go or biodegradable materials
- Styrofoam To-Go containers; compostable containers

Respectfully,



[-to-ban-styro-foam/#:~:text=1.%20It%20is%20a%20%E2%80%98known%20hazardous%20substance.%E2%80%99%20Like.%2036%20plastic%3A%20%E2%80%9Cpolystyrene%E2%80%9D%20%28PS%29%2C%20made%20%E2%80%98of%20manv%20styrenes%E2%80%99.](#)

³<https://radio.wpsu.org/post/heres-why-penn-states-no-longer-recycling-styrofoam/#:~:text=The%20nearly%205%2C000%20recycling%20bins%20on%20Penn%20State%E2%80%99s.reasons%2C%20one%20being%20the%20fall%20of%20oil%20prices.>

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Council Action:
Vote: 29: 0 : 0 (For : Against: Abstain)
Pass: <u> X </u> Fail: <u> </u> Postponed: <u> </u>

Presidential Action:
Approved <u> X </u> Veto <u> </u>
Signature: _____
Date: 2/2 /2021