



Empowering Communities, Advocating Solutions.

MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

BANNING STYROFOAM IN THE SFY 2020-2021 BUDGET

AN ACT to prohibit the distribution and use of expanded polystyrene packaging.

JUSTIFICATION

Expanded polystyrene (EPS) foam, commonly referred to as “Styrofoam”, poses a significant risk to the environment. Polystyrene is manufactured from petroleum, and requires intensive energy use and greenhouse gas emissions to produce and to ship. This material is not biodegradable, and after being used for food service, is not recyclable. Polystyrene packaging remains in the environment; littering open spaces, polluting waterways, and harming wildlife. Once in our environment, EPS foam doesn’t biodegrade but instead breaks into small pieces and eventually becomes microplastic pollution in our waterways.

EPS foam also poses a threat to human health. Styrene, a chemical in EPS foam, is listed by US Department of Health and Human Services’ National Toxicology Program as “reasonably anticipated to be a human carcinogen.” It is known to leach from food packaging containers into food or drinks, especially when exposed to heat. There is no reason to continue using EPS containers when safer, more environmentally friendly alternatives exist.

Individual retailers, including McDonalds and Dunkin Donuts, have begun to phase out the use of polystyrene products voluntarily, although many others are slow or unwilling to make the change. In response to these adverse environmental, public health, and solid waste impacts, local governments are taking action to protect their communities. Ulster, Albany, Nassau, Suffolk, Westchester, and Dutchess Counties, as well as NYC, have banned EPS foam packaging. All New Yorkers

SUMMARY OF KEY PROVISIONS

- Beginning in 2022, bans the distribution and use of expanded polystyrene foam containers used for prepared foods or beverages by food service providers.
- Beginning in 2022, bans the sale and use of polystyrene loose fill packaging.
- Authorizes the NYS DEC to ban other forms of polluting packaging.

CITIZENS CAMPAIGN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT SUPPORTS BANNING EXPANDED POLYSTYRENE IN THE SFY 2020-2021 BUDGET