

Vote yes on HB20-1162

Restrict Food and Retail Establishments' Use Of Polystyrene

House Sponsors: Cutter & Singer | **Senate Sponsors:** Story & Foote

Plastic pollution is a threat to our:

- **Climate:** From production to disposal, or as they permeate our environment, plastic releases greenhouse gases throughout its life cycle.
- **Health:** Plastic contains toxic additives and carcinogens. When exposed, whether that be through inhalation or ingestion through our food and water, plastics can affect cardiovascular, renal, gastrointestinal, neurological, reproductive, and respiratory systems.
- **Wildlife:** Plastic pollution harms [mammals](#), [birds](#), and [fish](#) when they ingest it. As a headwaters state, plastic that ends up in Colorado's waterways affects wildlife here and in the ocean.

To what extent?

- **Plastic in our oceans & Colorado waters:** Should we continue on our current trajectory, it is estimated that by 2050 there will be more plastic in the ocean than fish. Plastics were also found in over 90% of rainwater samples collected on the Colorado Front Range, even in the Rocky Mountain National Park.
- **Nothing we use for a few minutes should pollute Colorado for hundreds of years:** 50% of all plastics produced are single-use, designed to be used once and discarded only to persist indefinitely in our landfills or environment.

The worst form of plastic is a single-use plastic called polystyrene, commonly known as styrofoam

- [Polystyrene takes centuries to degrade](#), every piece of plastic used is still around. Polystyrene easily breaks down into tiny particles called [microplastics](#). They find their way into our water and food.
- Polystyrene is one of the most harmful plastics to human health. Styrene, a compound used to make polystyrene, can migrate from food packaging into food before consumption and is a known carcinogen.
- We are not recycling our way out of this problem. In fact, [only 1% of all polystyrene finds its way to a recycling center](#). Once there, it is not financially beneficial to recycle nor is it easy due to high levels of food contamination.
- It is unnecessary and can easily be replaced with [reusable, recyclable or compostable options](#).

Who else has restricted polystyrene?

Colorado can join 200 municipalities and multiple other states (Maine, Vermont, and Maryland) that have enacted a similar restriction. McDonalds, American Airlines, Jamba Juice, Dunkin' Donuts, and other food establishments are already phasing out their use of this plastic. *There is momentum.*

The bill would prohibit restaurants, hospitals and school cafeterias, and other food and retail establishments from using expanded polystyrene (foam) products after January 1st, 2022 unless establishments can provide proof of purchase before the date of implementation.

- It would apply to foam products like cups, plates, and containers that are used for on-premise consumption and off-premise consumption.
- It would **not** apply to prepackaged food containers. It does apply to products used for ready-to-eat food and drink.
- This proposal creates **a statewide standard** on the most unnecessary and toxic plastics.

Hannah Collazo hcollazo@environmentcolorado.org

Danny Katz danny@copirg.com

Randy Moorman randy@ecocycle.org



