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July 1, 2021

The Honorable Senator Mike McGuire, Chair
Senate Governance and Finance Committee
State Capitol, Room 408
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 1276 (Carrillo) – Unnecessary Food Service Ware – STRONG SUPPORT

Dear Senator McGuire,

On behalf of the City of Arcata, we strongly support AB 1276 (Carrillo) which will significantly reduce unnecessary waste and save businesses and local governments money. With the increase in takeout and food delivery as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, also comes an increase in the amount unused food and beverage accessories. These items including utensils, straws, napkins, condiment packages clog landfills, complicate recycling, and pollute streets and waterways. Pollution of these items is not limited to when they’re disposed of, but also negatively affects communities and ecosystems further upstream during resource extraction, production, and manufacturing.

On March 6, 2020 the City of Arcata adopted Ordinance No. 1527, which requires single-use disposable foodware be a fiber-based compostable material, requires reusable foodware be used for on-site dining, and requires accessory foodware be provided by request only. AB 1276 will align with the City of Arcata’s Foodware Waste Reduction ordinance and help to create regional and statewide cohesion.

The use of disposable food accessories has contributed to a 250-300% increase in single-use plastics and a 30% increase in waste. California’s local governments and taxpayers spend over \$428 million annually in ongoing efforts to clean up and prevent litter in streets, storm drains, parks and waterways. Additionally, California recyclers are now faced with a worsened crisis, as the vast majority of these non-recyclable single-use food accessories debase recycling systems and can contaminate many commercial compost facilities. This adds costs to collection, sorting, processing and disposal for cities and ratepayers.

Restaurants in the U.S. spend \$19 billion purchasing disposable food ware items. California restaurants that have voluntarily made the transition to a combination of by request and reusable food ware have been proven to save between \$3,000 and \$21,000 per year, while reducing waste and greenhouse gas emissions.

In order to address this issue, AB 1276 expands the plastic straws upon request law to include other single-use food accessories, other food facilities, and third-party delivery platforms - including food that is taken away, delivered, or served on-site.

Experts agree that upstream reduction of unnecessary packaging is by far the most efficient and cost-effective way to protect resources and communities, and help California reach its waste reduction and climate goals. Reducing unnecessary food service ware is a simple solution and a win-win for reducing waste in the first place, saving businesses money, and relieving recyclers, composters and local governments from the complications and costs associated with it.

Please help California's business operators and local governments save money while simultaneously protecting precious resources and cutting down on waste. We respectfully urge your and the rest of the committee's AYE vote.

Sincerely,



Brett Watson, Mayor
City of Arcata

cc:

Members, Senate Governance and Finance Committee

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Assembly Member Lorena Gonzalez, Jazmin.Marroquin@asm.ca.gov

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