



## Contents

Acknowledgments.....	3
Introduction .....	3
Build a Strong Foundation of Participating Restaurants and Cafes .....	6
How Are Businesses Community Leaders? .....	6
How Can Businesses Reduce Their Use of Disposable Plastic Straws? .....	7
How Can Businesses Communicate the Policy to Customers? .....	8
Reinforcing and Growing the Movement .....	8
How Can You Obtain Business Commitments? .....	8
How Can You Keep Businesses Engaged? .....	11
Individual Outreach to Build Momentum .....	13
Who are Your Potential Champions? .....	13
What Information Can You Provide to Interested Individuals? .....	13
How Do You Keep These Individuals and Groups Involved and Participating? .....	14
Going Beyond Straws, or What More Could You Do? .....	16
Appendices.....	17
Appendix 1: Straw-Free Partner Organizations .....	17
Appendix 2: Vendors and Resources for Non-Plastic or Re-usable Straws .....	19
Appendix 3: Articles and Further Information .....	20
Appendix 4: Restaurants Reducing and /or Eliminating Use of Plastic Straws .....	21
Appendix 5: Talking Points with Businesses .....	24
Appendix 6: Lessons Learned.....	26
Appendix 7: Example Printed Business Pledge Form.....	27
Appendix 8: Example Promotional Materials for Businesses .....	28
Appendix 9: Example Straw Usage Log.....	32
Appendix 10: Example Communications Strategy Sheet for Businesses.....	33
Appendix 11: Example Business Certificate .....	35
Appendix 12: Examples of Window Decals.....	36
Appendix 13: Table Tents.....	38

## Acknowledgments

This project was initiated by participants in the **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's** Pacific Southwest Region 9 Environmental Leadership Development Program, **Karina O'Connor, Jason Musante, and Rebecca Glyn**, and guided by leaders of **Region 9's Marine Debris Team, Anna-Marie Cook, Molly Martin, and Amanda Hong**. Its focus on creating a community toolkit for reducing plastic straw waste from restaurants was inspired by partner initiatives who openly shared their lessons learned. Special thanks in this regard to Jonathan Zaidman of the 1to1Movement based in San Diego, California, Jackie Nunez, of The Last Plastic Straw based in Santa Cruz, who have given permission to use graphics from their promotional materials, and Miriam Gordon and Samantha Sommer of Clean Water Action's ReThink Disposable program based in Oakland, California.

In researching alternative materials for plastic straws, Aardvark Straws based in Fort Wayne, Indiana and Simply Straws based in Costa Mesa, California were generous in providing sample products.

Also thanks to Philip Kum, the Environmental Leadership Development Program coordinator, and EPA Region 9's senior management team, for their generous support of this project.

## Introduction

Have you heard of the Pacific Ocean Garbage Patch? This area of manmade trash and debris has been concentrated by ocean currents of the North Pacific Subtropical Gyre and is estimated to be twice the size of the state of Texas and expected to double in size in the next ten years! This debris **can't easily** be cleaned up, as it is primarily comprised of plastic particles that break into smaller fragments and hover **at different points below the ocean surface. In this way, it's more of a "plastic soup" than a patch**<sup>1</sup>.

The plastic debris is a physical hazard to marine animals that become entangled or swallow large pieces of it, as well as a biochemical hazard to marine animals that ingest smaller plastic particles **known as "microplastics."** **Microplastics can contain** the suspected endocrine disruptor bisphenol A, which can affect reproduction and induce stress and genetic aberrations in a wide range of marine organisms. They also attract high concentrations of toxic chemicals found in the ocean, such as polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB), DDT, and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon (PAH), which are absorbed by marine animals when ingested.

The vast majority of marine debris items originate on land from the improper disposal of consumer products. The National Marine Debris Monitoring Program<sup>2</sup> and the **Ocean Conservancy's**

---

<sup>1</sup> "Plastic soup" as described by Charles Moore of the Plastic Soup Foundation:

<http://www.plasticsoupfoundation.org/en/facts/wat-de-plastic-soep/>

<sup>2</sup> National Marine Debris Monitoring Program: <http://water.epa.gov/type/oceb/marinedebris/nmdmp.cfm>

---

International Coastal Cleanup<sup>3</sup> found that plastic straws and other plastic food waste are among the top ten most frequently found marine debris items. Furthermore, the Ocean Conservancy's National Marine Debris monitoring program five year study showed plastic straws are one of the most common beach debris! You can see this firsthand when



visiting our rivers, lakes, and oceans. There is an overwhelming amount of fast food packaging and discarded plastic items that litter the shorelines. And most people who use these products have no idea where they end up and the problems they cause. For instance, did you know Americans use over 500 million<sup>4</sup> **plastic straws every day?** **That's enough to fill 46,400<sup>5</sup> school buses – that's a lot of straws!!!**

Reducing the number of plastic straws we use is an effective means of reducing one of the top ten marine debris items degrading our oceans. Reducing or eliminating the use of plastic straws is one of the easy first steps that can be taken to reduce plastics waste because most people **don't need them** and are willing to forego using them once they learn the extent of problems they cause. Giving up plastic straws, especially when dining in, is a behavioral change that would have little to no **consequence in people's lives, yet would make** a great positive change in the marine environment. This simple act could also "plant a seed" in raising **people's awareness** about other disposable plastic products we could go without or replace with reusable or non-plastic alternatives.

You can be a part of this effort by participating in The Last Straw Campaign! The idea of this toolkit is simple: **it provides resources for community organizations to adopt a "straw-free" campaign** that engages with local restaurants and school cafeterias to reduce plastic straw use at the source. Community organizations can encourage food vendors to institute a **"Straws Upon Request" policy** where they only provide straws to customers who request them, and upon request, provide

<sup>3</sup> Ocean Conservancy: <http://www.oceanconservancy.org/our-work/international-coastal-cleanup/top-10-items-found-1.html>

<sup>4</sup> The number of disposable straws distributed for use in the US are based on estimates provided by straw manufacturers to the folks that developed the Be Straw Free campaign (<http://ecocycle.org/bestrawfree/faqs> )

<sup>5</sup> Each 40-ft.-long school bus has a cab capacity of about 35'x 6.5'x 7.5', and a disposable straw is, on average, .75 cubic inches, so it would take more than 46,400 40-ft-long school buses to carry the straws we use in the US every year (<http://ecocycle.org/bestrawfree/faqs> )

reusable or non-plastic straws, such as those made of wax-coated paper, that would break down more easily in the environment.

As we know from marine debris surveys, many straws escape our waste management system and become litter that gets carried downstream and into our oceans. That is why this toolkit does not recommend restaurants offer straws upon request that are **made of “bioplastics,”** as these are neither recyclable nor compostable, or any straws made of compostable or biodegradable plastics, as these require industrial high-heat composting operations to finally break down.

The Straws Upon Request policy recommended in this toolkit is based on the premise that the best way to prevent straws from becoming marine debris is by not offering them in the first place and the second best way is by replacing plastic straws with non-plastic alternatives that are less threatening to the environment.

The toolkit provides ideas and materials for community organizations to educate restaurant staff and customers on the environmental benefits of a **“Straws Upon Request”** policy with talking points, training, and in-store displays. The toolkit also provides a simple spreadsheet and other materials for restaurants who wish to track straw use reduction and potential cost savings. The toolkit also supplies ideas and promotional materials for community organizations to support participating businesses on social media and with a recognition program.

The sample promotional and educational materials included in this toolkit are designed to be customizable for any community group or local restaurant that wants to be part of this movement to use **the “Last Straw”** graphics directly from this toolkit or insert your logo and brand them as your own. All graphics, materials, and ideas presented in this toolkit are offered as open-source to help expand the straw-free movement. A list of partner initiatives aimed at reducing plastic straw use worldwide is included in the appendix of this toolkit.

Finally, this toolkit encourages individuals to join the straw-free movement on a personal level by **saying “no straw please” when going out to restaurants** and by asking your friends and family to join you in reinforcing this. How do you expand this growing movement in your community? Keep reading!

## Build a Strong Foundation of Participating Restaurants and Cafes

If just one of your local cafes switches to a Straws Upon Request policy, the reduction in straw use can start to add up! For example, if the cafe sees 100 customers per day and only half of those customers request a straw, that cafe could save 350 straws per week, and 18,200 straws per year! If another 54 cafes reduce straws at the same rate, they can save over ONE MILLION straws each year (1,003,750) and save costs.

The reduction in straw waste can grow even more once you start getting larger restaurants on board. The Batali & Bastianich Hospitality Group, which operates over 20 restaurants worldwide, found that by implementing a Straws Upon Request policy, their restaurants alone could remove a quarter million straws and stirrers from the waste stream each year!<sup>6</sup>

*Since much of our daily choices are habitual, it can be helpful to script the critical moves needed to make this positive environmental change!*

### How Are Businesses Community Leaders?

Food service businesses can be important agents of positive environmental change in your community. As gathering places for friends and family, neighbors and colleagues, the sustainability practices employed by your favorite restaurants and cafes can influence our collective assumptions, in this case around the need for single-use disposable plastic straws. If restaurants take the lead in asking whether customers benefit from straws enough to justify their financial and environmental cost, that can lead us, as their customers, to ask the same question. Do straws really improve our dining experience or do we only use them out of habit because restaurants automatically provide them?

Answering that question can now be informed by the discovery that plastic straws and stirrers are one of the top ten most commonly found trash items found in our

### 5 Steps to Getting Businesses on Board

1. Identify goals and objectives for reducing plastic straw use.
2. Look for local community engagers and influencers that are important to local businesses such as school green clubs, kids clubs, beach user groups (for businesses near the beach), and local politicians.
3. Develop an outreach strategy to engage one-on-one with local businesses, for example at local street fairs and Earth Day events.
4. Start by targeting early adopters such as smaller, local cafes who have more control on their ordering, have more of a stake in their business reputation and have more invested in the local community.
5. Promote those business using your website and on social media platforms.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.eater.com/2013/7/31/6393479/mario-batali-to-institute-straws-upon-request-policy>



oceans, with devastating effects on marine life. Equipped with this knowledge, community groups can help guide restaurants toward reducing plastic straw use and restaurants can then guide the public further toward this shift.

A restaurant implementing a Straws Upon Request policy could still be inclusive of customers who use straws by offering alternatives to plastic straws, such as those made from wax-coated paper, bamboo, or straw itself. These materials decompose more easily in the environment and therefore pose much less of a threat to marine life if they escape the waste management system when compared with any type of plastic, including “bioplastics” or even plastics labeled as “compostable”.

### How Can Businesses Reduce Their Use of Disposable Plastic Straws?

When meeting with participating or potentially participating businesses, you can discuss the following strategies to help them reduce plastic straw use and implement a Straws Upon Request policy:

- Meet with the restaurant owner to discuss reducing the number of plastic straws they distribute. You can provide information on plastic pollution and its downstream effects on marine life, as well as the cost savings<sup>7</sup> they could realize by implementing a Straws Upon Request policy.
- Discuss a step-by-step process for reducing plastic straw use. Suggest they train staff to no longer automatically provide straws with drink orders and implement a gradual approach if needed, by first moving straws from their typical location before providing them only by request.
- Provide the restaurant with information about offering only non-plastic or reusable straws for customers who request them. See Appendix 2 for list of alternative straw vendors.
- Inform the business owner that some paper straw manufacturers, such as Aardvark, are “Made in the U.S.A.” and the straws can be printed with logos and colorful designs, which can serve as marketing materials. Bring sample non-plastic straws to your meeting.
- Discuss ways that the business owner can communicate the Straws Upon Request policy with their staff. The staff will need to communicate the policy to the customers, so it is important

#### Additional Alternatives to Replace Plastic Disposable Straws

*In addition to paper, there are some interesting and new, yet historic, compostable straws coming to the market. In early 2015, Alex Bennet launched an effort to raise approximately \$14,000 to start a business making straws made of straw.*

*This effort is a nod back to the rye grass straws commonly used in the 1880s before the paper straw was invented by Marvin Stone. The enterprise, with pesticide-free rye grown in farms in Maine and Germany, states that **the straws are “sterilized and approved by the FDA as a food contact substance.” For more information, check out: <http://strawstraws.com>***

<sup>7</sup> Suggest that businesses use the Straw Usage Log in Appendix X to track cost savings.

that the staff understand the positive aspects of the policy so that they can inform customers and answer **customers'** questions.

- Suggest the business track plastic straw use before and after implementing a Straws Upon Request policy, possibly by number of boxes ordered. Businesses could also track the cost difference before and after switching from plastic straws with all drink orders to non-plastic straws only by request.
- You should also discuss ways that the business can communicate the Straws Upon Request policy to its customers, emphasizing its environmental benefits or by publicizing the amount of straws removed from the waste stream since implementing the policy.

Note that you may have to approach the businesses more than one time to discuss the best approach for them, share the appropriate communications materials and help them train their staff. We have included talking points in the Appendix to help you work with businesses.

## How Can Businesses Communicate the Policy to Customers?

As mentioned above, it is important to discuss how the business can communicate a Straws Upon Request policy with its customers. There are many options for many different types of restaurants to display their participation in this eco-friendly initiative to reduce plastic pollution. You can find various examples of business communication strategies in Figure 1 of this Toolkit. Of these options, higher end restaurants are more likely to change their menu on a regular basis, so adding a note to the bottom of their menu may work best. For local cafes and casual restaurants, displaying table tents, window stickers or certificates are all options. For all restaurants, communication from waiters and counter staff is key.

### Protect the Animals

Some restaurants have embraced alternatives to disposable plastic straws because of their location or desire to be an ecofriendly business. For example, the Disney Corporation has chosen to use no plastic straws or lids in their Animal Kingdom park in Florida to prevent these items from getting into the animal habitats.<sup>1</sup>

## Reinforcing and Growing the Movement

It is important to get strong commitments from the businesses that participate in the initiative and to **continually reengage their participation with regular assessments of the initiative's impact on their business costs and customers.**

With clear commitments, you could develop a larger initiative, possibly within a local business district, to encourage business owners to join forces in reducing plastic pollution. There are a number of ways to reinforce their participation and motivate their continued support.

## How Can You Obtain Business Commitments?

When you initially meet with the restaurant owners about how they can join the campaign and talk with them about how to apply a Straws Upon Request policy, you can provide them with a paper pledge form which provides their contact information and commitment to specific actions to support the policy.





### Figure 1 Business Outreach Strategies

These are examples of different ways that restaurants and cafes can use to communicate to customers that they are using a Straws Upon Request Policy.

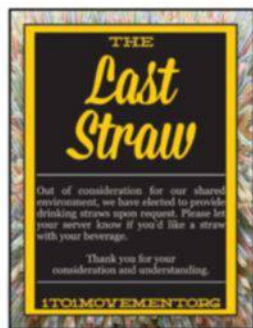


### Table Toppers:

Table toppers are a great way for business to reach all of their customers with their commitment to sustainability and build brand loyalty with each person who sits at their tables.

### Menu Commentary:

For businesses that change their menus regularly, consider asking them to include a note about their commitment to reducing unnecessary plastic straws.



### Window decals:

Window decals are small and easy to position for visibility. We recommend pairing a window decal with an additional outreach method.

### Certificate of recognition:

A certificate of recognition is a great way for businesses to show their customers that they have been recognized for their efforts.

Each business you approach could make the commitment on their own or as part of the larger initiative. Figure 2 shows an example of a pledge form that was developed by The Last Plastic Straw campaign, out of Santa Cruz, California. Other campaigns, such as the Straw Wars effort in London, UK (<http://strawwars.org/>), has an online form available on their website, also shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 2. Strategies to Retain Business Participants**

Pledge forms allow you to get stronger commitments restaurants and clear contacts who you can follow up with to strategize with regarding implementation of the Straws Upon Request policy.

**Paper Pledge Form**

Your businesses are more likely to incorporate long-term actions to reduce plastic straw use if they commit to the changes up front in writing.

**Online Pledge Form**

Online pledge forms offer an easy way for businesses to enroll and make it easy for you to obtain their contact information and address for mapping purposes..

## How Can You Keep Businesses Engaged?

Local restaurants and cafes may be more interested in joining a campaign to reduce straw use if it fits into their brand and if their efforts are publicized to existing and potential customers. The business may benefit from being regarded as an industry leader or innovator in implementing environmentally responsible/green procurement practices, and serve as a resource and reference point for the growing movement to reduce plastic pollution. Therefore, listing participating businesses on your social media site and/or including a map showing the participating businesses can be a strong motivator for restaurants to join. The listing and map are free advertising to a targeted audience who is already interested in reducing their own plastic footprint. Examples of these lists and maps developed by partner straw-free initiatives are shown in Figure 3.



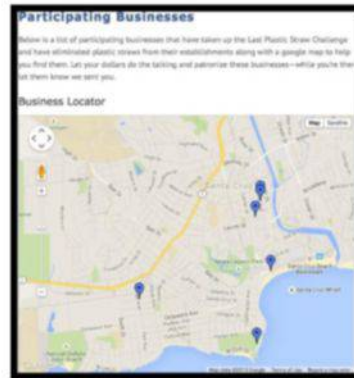
**Figure 3. Strategies to Promote Business Participants**

Maps showing participating restaurants and cafes provide publicity to the businesses and provide information to consumers on where they can go to find more sustainable options for eating out.



**Business Listing**

Your website can promote your participants by listing them with their information and images.



**Business Map**

Inclusion of a map on your website is another great way to promote these restaurants.



**Participating Bars, Restaurants and Clubs**

The map on the strawwar.org web site shows participating businesses in the London area and visually distinguishes between restaurants, bars and clubs..

## Individual Outreach to Build Momentum

While having local restaurants and cafes in your campaign builds a solid base in reducing straw use in your community, bringing in individuals and local groups can reinforce and expand the movement by **saying “no straw please” when they go out to local restaurants**. In addition, individuals and local groups can bring passion and enthusiasm to the program to build momentum!

### Who are Your Potential Champions?

Depending upon your community, there are a number of different groups you could target to strengthen and grow the Straw-Free movement. Targeting early adopters and influential individuals as partners can kick start your efforts. You can start by reaching out to school groups and their green clubs. Kids are often the main expected target audience for straw use and kids have a great ability to influence not just their peers but their families and businesses catering to families in the community. Kids and teachers in high school green clubs are often looking for projects where they can make a difference. They could start **by making changes at their school’s lunch room** and then taking the message out to local businesses as well. Challenges for them to reach a set number of businesses or reduce a target level of straw use could help spread the word through the school’s newspaper and to their peers.

Many other groups could take a leadership role in this initiative, such as **Clean Water Action’s ReThink Disposable** program and the Surfrider Foundation, who are already working on efforts to reduce plastic waste in our oceans. There **are also many ‘park friends groups’** and watershed groups who understand the value of protecting the natural environment. Volunteers from these groups could be passionate supporters of this effort and may already be doing some work to clean up and reduce the use of plastic marine debris items such as straws.

Lastly, you can engage individuals in your community who have influence in the media or at specific restaurants and cafeterias. Staff at city or county government agencies can bring the message to the media as well as to businesses they regulate, or to promote green standards they may want restaurants to implement.

### What Information Can You Provide to Interested Individuals?

In addition to the basic, compelling information about the vast number of straws used per day and disposable plastic straws being one of the top ten marine debris items, personal stories, videos and sources for alternatives to disposable plastic straws will be important to share with individuals interested in joining this movement. Sharing stories of beach clean-ups, individuals making and choosing

#### Reducing Straw Use At Our National Parks

In 2013, Milo Cress, from the Be Straw Free project, worked with Xanterra, the concessionaire at many national parks, to launch a **“Choose to be Straw Free”** program on Earth Day, April 22. As part of this program, the number of parks to go straw-free was expanded to include: Crater Lake Lodge, Rocky Mountain National Park, Mount Rushmore National Memorial, Furnace Creek Resort in Death Valley National Park, and five Ohio State Park Lodges.

<http://www.choosetobestrawfree.com/latest-news/>

<http://ecocycle.org/bestrawfree>



alternatives to disposable plastics and honoring your own champions will all make a difference in inspiring others to get involved. Sharing fun videos and local events also helps keep folks interested. You can also tap into the larger community of folks engaged in this issue in other communities through the internet. The internet allows us to define our community beyond our local geography and to tie your community to other cities supporting reduction in straw use.

In addition to providing lists or maps of local restaurants and cafés who have already adopted a Straws Upon Request policy, there are other resources that you can provide to individuals participating in the campaign. While they may support the reduction or elimination of single-use plastic disposable straws, they may still use straws for certain occasions. Fortunately, there are many alternatives to plastic available these days and the number of alternatives is growing. There are vendors selling beautiful clear and colorful glass straws as well as metal straws that can be reused. Many of these vendors also sell straw cleaners and carrying cases. Many mainstream coffee shops (e.g. Starbucks and Peet's) even sell combination cup and straws for reuse. When your businesses see individuals bringing in cups with other vendors logos on them, they may be interested in selling reusable straws and drink containers with their own logos printed on them. Since many of these businesses sell their products over the internet, having a web page linking to these businesses is easy.

## How Do You Keep These Individuals and Groups Involved and Participating?

There are many communication and outreach tools that you can use to let folks know about your campaign and provide ongoing information and inspirational updates. Most campaigns use websites and social media platforms to provide most of the information discussed above. Tools like WordPress can be used to create a dynamic social media site highlighting local participating restaurants, showcasing stories, linking to partner campaigns, such as ReThink Disposable and Be Straw Free, and inspirational videos, such as TED talks that raise awareness of **other groups'** efforts to reduce plastic pollution in oceans. You can also incorporate links to online pledges to reinforce a **participant's commitment to the** movement and track how many folks are involved. Sample websites are shown in Figure 4 and sample links are included in the Appendix.

While websites and social media are great for keeping your participants engaged, how do you get the word out when you initially start the campaign? Many campaigns need to start their efforts with face-to-face discussions to encourage partners to join their efforts and spread the word. Printed flyers at local coffee shops and newspaper articles are great ways to raise community awareness and share your web and social media information. Participating in community Earth Day and Zero Waste events can also bring attention and participants to the movement.

Continuing to host events and challenges to re-engage your participants is also important. A new cafe using compostable straws, like fun printed paper straws, could host a launch party. You could invite a group to put together a community art project that focuses public attention on the issue of disposable plastic and their impacts on the environment. You could create a community challenge between different school groups to add more business partners and raise awareness of the simple acts we can each take to protect our waters. Keep the activities fun and then share pictures to highlight the effort



and thank the participants!



### Figure 4. Individual Outreach Strategies

Website, facebook pages and press articles offer ways to reach out to the public to engage them to help expand and reinforce the campaign to local businesses.



#### Facebook Pages / Blogs

Facebook and other social media platforms offer ways to share information with your community of participants that engages and inspires them on a frequent basis.



#### Videos / Ted Talks

Inclusion of fun short videos and inspirational Ted talks about reducing straw use and other disposable plastics can inspire your community.

#### Swap your Straw Resources

There are many alternatives to the Plastic Straw. Products listed below are great alternatives and we have provided links to their websites to help you make the change.

- Archway Straws:** Paper straws rigid enough not to break down in your drink. Made in the USA from renewable resources, BPA-free, and 100% compostable. [Archway Straws.com](#)
- Bottlecap Straws:** Bottlecap Glass Straws are an eco-friendly, reusable alternative to wasteful, traditional plastic straws. They're a major boost to the sustainability movement that is gaining steam nationwide and on the tropical island of Bali, where the straws are made. [BottlecapStraws.com](#)
- Simply Straws:** Reusable glass straws, sustainable, durable, lifetime guarantee and handcrafted in California. [SimplyStraws.com](#)
- Glass Pharma Straws:** Glass Drinking Straws offered in various styles and lengths for every type of beverage that are dishwasher safe and fully guaranteed. [Glass Pharma Straws.com](#)
- Strawless Straws:** Reusable glass straws, sustainable, durable, lifetime guarantee and handcrafted in California. [Strawless.com](#)
- Strawless Steel Straws:** The World's First, Innovative products made by hand in the USA and shipped in recycled or reused materials. [steelstraws.com](#)
- Titanium Straws:** Made of food grade titanium, which is reusable, safe, does not corrode, is



#### Webpage/Resources

A webpage can be a one-stop location of information for individuals like why straws are important to reduce and what alternatives exist.



#### Press Article

Articles in local newspapers or inserts from the local recycling agency can help expand your community of participants.

## Going Beyond Straws, or What More Could You Do?

Now that you've tackled reducing plastic straw use at your local food service businesses, what next steps can you take to further address the marine debris problem? Remember that straws are only one of the top ten marine debris items. How could you reduce any of the others top ten items at the source? Whatever the answer, it is sure to need the same type of grassroots movement currently taking hold around reducing plastic straw use. We encourage you to share the techniques and promotional materials you develop with fellow individuals and organizations engaged in this movement, just as so many have shared the tools in this toolkit with you!



This figure obtained from Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup, acquired at: <http://www.oceanconservancy.org/our-work/international-coastal-cleanup/top-10-items-found-1.html>.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Straw-Free Partner Organizations

Organization	Description	Website/Contact
Be Straw Free	Campaign to reduce straws with Milo. Talking points with references, infographics, video.	<a href="http://www.choosetobestrawfree.com/">http://www.choosetobestrawfree.com/</a>
Be Straw Free	<b>Milo's web site, hosted by recycling</b> nonprofit. Table Tents, Each One Reach One approach.	<a href="http://www.ecocycle.org/bestrawfree">http://www.ecocycle.org/bestrawfree</a>
The Last Plastic Straw	Volunteer community project for <a href="#">Save Our Shores</a> out of Santa Cruz with Facebook page focused on business and individual engagement. Website showcases participating businesses and includes links to TED talks (The power of one straw).	<a href="http://thelastplasticstraw.org/">http://thelastplasticstraw.org/</a> Jackie Nunez (founder)
The Last Straw	1 to 1 movement with infographic on straw use and Ted Talk.	<a href="http://1to1movement.org/campaigns/">http://1to1movement.org/campaigns/</a> Jonathan Zaidman, Exec. Director of 1 to 1 Movement, San Diego <a href="mailto:jonathan@1to1movement.org">jonathan@1to1movement.org</a>
Straw Wars	London based campaign aimed at reducing straw use by businesses. Website includes talking points and video aimed at consumers.	<a href="http://strawwars.org/">http://strawwars.org/</a>
Straw-Free Kids	Nonprofit to encourage kids to take on different campaigns, <b>links to Milo's</b> campaign. Link to grant resources.	<a href="http://startasnowball.com/straw-free-kids-community-service/">http://startasnowball.com/straw-free-kids-community-service/</a>
Force for Change	Online petition to reduce straw use at chain restaurants. Letters sent to TGIF, and Applebees CEO.	<a href="http://forcechange.com/81519/stop-plastic-straw-waste-at-chain-restaurants/">http://forcechange.com/81519/stop-plastic-straw-waste-at-chain-restaurants/</a>
Clean Water Action/ReThink Disposable	Clean Water Action project to reduce single-use disposable food service ware.	<a href="http://www.cleanwater.org/ca/rethinkdisposable/reducingdisposablesinfoodservice">http://www.cleanwater.org/ca/rethinkdisposable/reducingdisposablesinfoodservice</a>
Plastic Pollution Coalition	Alliance of individuals, organizations, and businesses working to reduction plastic pollution and impacts	<a href="http://plasticpollutioncoalition.org/">http://plasticpollutioncoalition.org/</a>
My Plastic-Free Life	Guide for individuals to reduce plastic usage in personal life.	<a href="http://myplasticfreelife.com/">http://myplasticfreelife.com/</a>
Plastic Oceans	Campaign to reduce plastic pollution in oceans.	<a href="http://www.plasticoceans.net/">http://www.plasticoceans.net/</a>
Ocean Conservancy	Large nonprofit focused on protecting oceans. Leader of Trash-Free Seas Alliance. Source for Infographic showing 25 years of International	<a href="http://www.oceanconservancy.org/our-work/trash-free-seas-alliance/">http://www.oceanconservancy.org/our-work/trash-free-seas-alliance/</a> <a href="http://www.oceanconservancy.org">http://www.oceanconservancy.org</a> George Leonard, 831-440-7958 <a href="mailto:gleonard@oceanconservancy.org">gleonard@oceanconservancy.org</a>

Organization	Description	Website/Contact
	Coastal Cleanup and top ten marine debris items.	
5 Gyres	Leading nonprofit supporting research and action against plastic in ocean. Educational information, California Plastic Beach Project.	<a href="http://5gyres.org/">http://5gyres.org/</a> <a href="http://5gyres.org/how_to_get_involved/projects/plastic_beach_project/">http://5gyres.org/how_to_get_involved/projects/plastic_beach_project/</a>
Surfrider Foundation	SF chapter is working on a straw-free campaign.	<a href="http://sf.surfrider.org/">http://sf.surfrider.org/</a> Carolynn Box

Appendix 2: Vendors and Resources for Non-Plastic or Re-usable Straws

Vendor/Organization	Description	Website/Contact
Aardvark Straws	Wax-coated paper straw producer based in Indiana, USA.	<a href="http://www.aardvarkstraws.com/">http://www.aardvarkstraws.com/</a>
Straw Straws	Startup producer of drinking straws made of biodegradable straw.	<a href="http://strawstraws.com/">http://strawstraws.com/</a>
Simply Straws	Reusable glass straw company. Website provides info on straw use and impacts and pledge form against plastic straws.	<a href="https://simplystraws.com/">https://simplystraws.com/</a>
Green Restaurant Association	Provides resources for food service businesses to become more environmentally responsible.	<a href="http://www.dinegreen.com/default.asp">http://www.dinegreen.com/default.asp</a>
TraX App	A mobile rewards program to support positive actions (e.g. using reusable items).	<a href="http://traxapp.co/">http://traxapp.co/</a>

Appendix 3: Articles and Further Information

Organization	Description	Website
Ban the Bag	Article on Straw History/Reduction efforts.	<a href="http://www.banthebagspdx.com/?p=413">http://www.banthebagspdx.com/?p=413</a>
National Geographic	Great Pacific Gyre article.	<a href="http://education.nationalgeographic.com/education/encyclopedia/great-pacific-garbage-patch/?ar_a=1">http://education.nationalgeographic.com/education/encyclopedia/great-pacific-garbage-patch/?ar_a=1</a>
Green Peace	Article on Great Pacific Trash Vortex.	<a href="http://www.greenpeace.org/international/en/campaigns/oceans/fit-for-the-future/pollution/trash-vortex/">http://www.greenpeace.org/international/en/campaigns/oceans/fit-for-the-future/pollution/trash-vortex/</a>
Plastics at Sea	Research expedition studying effects of plastic at sea.	<a href="http://www.sea.edu/plastics">http://www.sea.edu/plastics</a>
US EPA Region 9 Marine Debris Team	EPA program to address plastic pollution in Pacific Ocean. Includes plastic source reduction toolkit for colleges and universities.	<a href="http://www.epa.gov/region9/marine-debris/Source%20Reduction%20Toolkit%20One-Pager.pdf">http://www.epa.gov/region9/marine-debris/Source Reduction Toolkit One-Pager:</a> <a href="http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/productstewardship.site-ym.com/resource/resmgr/PSI_Reports/2015.04.20.Toolkit-One-Pager.pdf">http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/productstewardship.site-ym.com/resource/resmgr/PSI_Reports/2015.04.20.Toolkit-One-Pager.pdf</a> Source Reduction Full Toolkit: <a href="http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/productstewardship.site-ym.com/resource/resmgr/Files/2015.03.27_PSI_EPAR9_MarineD.pdf">http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/productstewardship.site-ym.com/resource/resmgr/Files/2015.03.27_PSI_EPAR9_MarineD.pdf</a>



## Appendix 4: Restaurants Reducing and /or Eliminating Use of Plastic Straws

(Compiled from <http://thelastplasticstraw.org/restaurant-directory/> )

### California

Assembly - Providing straws only upon request.

1108 Pacific Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

(831) 824-6100

[assembleforfood.com](http://assembleforfood.com)

The Bagelry - Plastic Straw free

320 Cedar St, Santa Cruz , CA 95060

(831) 429-8049

[bagelrysantacruz.com](http://bagelrysantacruz.com)

Bantam - paper straws

1010 Fair St., Ste J, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

(831) 420-0101

[www.bantam1010.com](http://www.bantam1010.com)

Cafe Delmarette - Plastic Straw free

1126 Pacific Ave., Santa Cruz, CA 95060

(831) 420-1025

[cafedelmarette.com](http://cafedelmarette.com)

**Lillian's Italian Kitchen** - Plastic Straw Free

1116 Soquel Ave, Santa Cruz, CA 95062

(831) 425-2288

[lilliansitaliankitchen.com](http://lilliansitaliankitchen.com)

Lúpulo Craft Beer House - Paper straws upon request

233 Cathcart Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

(831) 454-8306

[lupulosc.com](http://lupulosc.com)

Olitas Cantina & Grille - Phasing out plastic straws and providing biodegradable paper straws

49 Municipal Wharf, Santa Cruz, CA 95060 / (831) 458-9393

<http://olitasantacruz.com>

The Truck Stop – no plastic straws

Santa Cruz, CA 95060 / (831) 621-7361

<http://thetruckstopsc.com>

**Zachary's** - Paper straws upon request!

819 Pacific Ave, Santa Cruz, CA 95060  
(831) 427-0646  
zacharyssantacruz.com

Whale City Bakery - Plastic Straw Free  
490 Highway One, Davenport, CA 95017  
(831)423-9009  
<http://www.whalecitybakery.com/>

The Haute Enchilada Café - Plastic Straw free  
7902 Moss Landing Rd, Moss Landing, CA 95039  
(831) 663-5843  
hauteenchilada.com

Monterey Bay Aquarium Café - Plastic Straw and plastic bottle free!  
886 Cannery Row, Monterey, CA 93940  
(831) 648-4800  
<http://www.montereybayaquarium.org/visit/dining>

**Crocker Dining Hall & Pheobe's Café** - Using compostable straws!  
800 Asilomar Ave, Pacific Grove, CA 93950  
(888)635-5310  
crockerdininghall.com & pheobescape.com

Academy Cafe & The Moss Room -  
Located at the California Academy of Sciences  
55 Music Concourse Drive, San Francisco, CA 94118  
(415) 876-6121  
<http://themossroom.com> & <http://themossroom.com/academy-cafe/>

The Naked Pig Café - No straws, no single use plastic!  
435 Santa Rosa Ave, Santa Rosa, CA 95404  
(707) 978-3231  
<http://on.fb.me/ZjQuMf>

Hawaii

Bevy -Serving reusable stainless steel straws upon request  
661 Auahi Street, Honolulu, HI 96813  
(808) 594-7445  
bevybar.com

Maine

The Maine Grind - Plastic Straw free  
192 Main Street, Ellsworth, Maine 04605  
(207) 667-0011  
mainegrind.com

International

Antigua Sailing Week - Partner bars and restaurants and at their official party venues are asked to support the **'Last Plastic Straw' campaign**.

Antigua Yacht Club Marina Resort,  
English Harbour, Antigua.  
+1 (268) 734-6366  
sailingweek.com

Bali Buda Café - No plastic straws served.  
Jl. Jembawan 1, Ubud 80571  
<http://www.balibuda.com/>

Kafe Ubud - They have a sign on every table **saying why they don't serve straws. They use bamboo when a straw is requested.**

# 44B, Padang Tegal, Ubud  
Tel. +62-361-7803802  
kafe@balispirit.com

Kismet - drinks, served with reusable stainless steel straws!  
17 Jalan Goutama  
Ubud 80571  
+62 821-3838-9000  
<http://www.KismetBali.com/>

Vancouver Aquarium - Plastic Straw and lid free policy  
845 Avison Way, Vancouver, BC, V6G 3E2  
Tel. 604-659-FISH (3474)  
<http://www.vanaqua.org/>

One Ten Thai  
PR-110, Maleza Alta, Aguadilla, Puerto Rico  
Tel. +1 787-890-0113  
facebook.com/onetenthai

Soggy Dollar bar – no straws or stirers  
Sand Castle Hotel, White Bay, Jost Van Dyke, British Virgin Islands

## Appendix 5: Talking Points with Businesses

Listed below are talking points for volunteers that are approaching businesses in their communities about reducing use of disposable straws. Be sure to take examples of table tents, straw usage log and pledge forms with you when visiting restaurants!

### Why Reducing Straw Use is Important

- Ocean plastic has turned up everywhere, from the deep sea to buried in Arctic ice.
- Straws are among the top 10 items found on our beaches.
- Plastic trash has been ingested with dire consequences by some 700 species of marine wildlife.
- Animals can become entangled or swallow large pieces of plastic. The smaller plastic particles **known as “microplastics” are also a biochemical hazard** when ingested.
- Over 500,000,000 plastic straws are produced every day. Unfortunately, most of these straws are only used for a few minutes then end up in our oceans, contributing to millions of tons of trash and over 1,000,000 seabirds and 100,000 marine mammals ingesting plastic.
- Plastic waste makes up between 60 to 80% of total marine debris

### Benefits to Businesses

- Reducing straw use can reduce your operating costs.
- Switching to more sustainable alternatives **can also ensure you’re aligning yourself** with the values of your customers and employees!
- Branding your café as a eco-friendly locale can attract new customers.
- By joining the movement, you can join other restaurants promoted on website for straw-free business.

### What To Do

- Implement a Straws Upon Request policy by asking customers if they would like a straw with their drink, rather than providing one without asking first.
- Train your staff to no longer automatically provide straws and explain to them why you are implementing this policy.
- Place table tents, signs or menu notes to inform your customers about the new policy.

### Examples of Other Businesses

- There are establishments in many coastal cities that have already incorporated these practices. You can find them at <http://thelastplasticstraw.org/restaurant-directory/> and <http://strawwars.org/>
- All the 15+ restaurants in chef Mario Batali's Batali & Bastianich Hospitality Group have instituting a "straws on request policy."
- Miami has banned straw use due to beach impacts and the City of Monterey has also considered a ban on straw use. By incorporating these business practices now, you are getting ahead of other establishments!

### Talking Points for Kids

- 500 million straws are produced every day, not counting all of the straws attached to juice and milk cartons which are handed out in school lunchrooms and put into lunch boxes every day!
- 500 million straws could fill over 127 school buses each day, or more than 46,400 school buses every year.

## Appendix 6: Lessons Learned

The 1to1 Movement ([www.1to1movement.org](http://www.1to1movement.org)) is an organization focused on raising awareness and making change on the issues of sustainability. Headquartered in San Diego, they seek to continue the conversation on conservation through grassroots educational programs and outreach with business owners. An ongoing campaign at the 1to1 Movement is to help hospitality establishments operate more sustainably through the reduction of plastic straw use. Executive Director Jonathan Zaidman was kind enough to offer the following “lessons learned” from their campaign:

- The environmental issues related to plastic straw use, especially the contribution to marine debris, is a new concept that most people are not aware of. There is a need to provide some basic education of the issue when promoting *The Last Straw* campaign.
- Getting individual consumers on board with plastic straw reduction is easier than businesses.
  - Plastic straws are very common in hospitality establishments. However, straws are really not needed for patrons to enjoy beverage orders. Many establishments believe that 85-90% of customers want plastic straws, but it is estimated that really only 8-10% actually want them.
  - The success of a campaign will be increased by conducting outreach with both restaurants and consumers.
- Attempting to promote the potential cost savings to restaurants through reduced straw use is not very effective. Plastic straws are very cheap and there are no significant cost issues for the business. For example, a research project with **Applebee’s** looked at how a 50% reduction in plastic straw use would equate to a \$250K savings yearly. Compared to an estimated \$75M in drink sales and the potential cost savings would be just a tiny fraction.
  - The environmental cause provides a much better motivator for business to adopt the campaign.
  - **“Green-friendly” restaurants are low-hanging fruit** because plastic straw reduction lines up with their existing environmental ethic.
- Getting business ownership interested in the campaign is the first step. Even with business owner interest, getting business managers to successfully implement the campaign can be potentially more difficult due to concerns of employee time consumption and effective communication of the campaign goals depending on the ownership/management/staff relationship.
  - Implementing the campaign in the business may require multiple visits and continued assistance to be successful.
  - Restaurant staff meetings are an effective forum for communicating the goals and process of the campaign.



Appendix 7: Example Printed Business Pledge Form



As the owner or manager of \_\_\_\_\_  
(name of business), I am officially participating in the **The Last Straw** campaign as part  
of an effort to keep my community litter free and reduce plastic pollution.

As a participating business I commit to: (please check all that apply)

- Only provide straws upon customer's request.
- Train my staff to only provide straws upon request
- Print on menu "**Straws Available Upon Request**"
- Offer a paper or reusable option to plastic straws.
- Discontinue the use and purchase of plastic straws.
- OR get rid of straws completely.

Signed,

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Business Website: \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix 8: Example Promotional Materials for Businesses



# Provide Straws Only Upon Request!



THE AVERAGE RESTAURANT USES  
**36,400 straws**  
PER YEAR



IF THEY WERE ABLE TO DIVERT THEIR STRAW USAGE BY 50%, THIS WOULD ACCOUNT FOR  
**18,250 straws**  
DIVERTED PER YEAR..PER RESTAURANT



AMERICA'S USE APPROXIMATELY  
**500 million straws** PER DAY  
WHICH WOULD EQUAL THE DISTANCE OF  
California to China in straws

LINED UP IN A ROW, THE AMOUNT OF  
straws which the US uses  
IN 1 YEAR

**WOULD  
CIRCLE**



**92 times**

**AROUND THE EARTH**

**66 Restaurants**  
PARTICIPATE IN  
**The Last Straw campaign**



EFFECTIVELY DIVERTING  
**1.2 MILLION**  
**SINGLE-USE**  
**NON-RECYCLABLE**  
**PLASTIC**  
DRINKING STRAWS FROM OUR  
LANDFILLS, NEIGHBORHOODS,  
AND WATERWAYS PER YEAR.



# Provide Straws Only Upon Request!



THE AVERAGE RESTAURANT USES  
**36,400 straws**  
PER YEAR



IF THEY WERE ABLE TO DIVERT THEIR STRAW USAGE BY 50%, THIS WOULD ACCOUNT FOR  
**18,250 straws**  
DIVERTED PER YEAR..PER RESTAURANT



AMERICA'S USE APPROXIMATELY  
**500 million straws** PER DAY  
WHICH WOULD EQUAL THE DISTANCE OF  
California to China in straws

Plastic constitutes **90%** OF ALL TRASH FLOATING IN THE WORLD'S OCEANS

**66 Restaurants**  
PARTICIPATE IN  
**The Last Straw campaign**



EFFECTIVELY DIVERTING  
**1.2 MILLION**  
**SINGLE-USE**  
**NON-RECYCLABLE**  
**PLASTIC**  
DRINKING STRAWS FROM OUR  
LANDFILLS, NEIGHBORHOODS,  
AND WATERWAYS PER YEAR.



## Provide Straws Only Upon Request!



THE AVERAGE RESTAURANT USES  
**36,400 straws**  
PER YEAR



IF THEY WERE ABLE TO DIVERT THEIR STRAW USAGE BY 50%, THIS WOULD ACCOUNT FOR  
**18,250 straws**  
DIVERTED PER YEAR..PER RESTAURANT

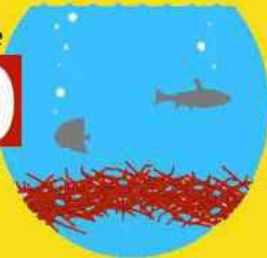


AMERICA'S USE APPROXIMATELY  
**500 million straws** PER DAY  
WHICH WOULD EQUAL THE DISTANCE OF  
California to China in straws

Straws are among the

**TOP 10**

MARINE DEBRIS ITEMS



**66 Restaurants**  
PARTICIPATE IN  
**The Last Straw campaign**



EFFECTIVELY DIVERTING  
**1.2 MILLION**  
**SINGLE-USE**  
**NON-RECYCLABLE**  
**PLASTIC**  
DRINKING STRAWS FROM OUR  
LANDFILLS, NEIGHBORHOODS,  
AND WATERWAYS PER YEAR.



Appendix 9: Example Straw Usage Log



Participant:

Begin date:

End Date:

**QUARTERLY STRAW USAGE LOG**

Week	Date	Item	Unit	Unit Price	Inventory On Hand	Units Purchased	Purchase Cost	% Change Units Purchased	Cost Savings
1							\$0.00	0	\$0.00
2							\$0.00	0	\$0.00
3							\$0.00	0	\$0.00
4							\$0.00	0	\$0.00
<b>Monthly totals:</b>						<b>0</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
5							\$0.00	0	\$0.00
6							\$0.00	0	\$0.00
7							\$0.00	0	\$0.00
8							\$0.00	0	\$0.00
<b>Monthly totals:</b>						<b>0</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
9							\$0.00	0	\$0.00
10							\$0.00	0	\$0.00
11							\$0.00	0	\$0.00
12							\$0.00	0	\$0.00
<b>Monthly totals:</b>						<b>0</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Quarterly total:</b>						<b>0</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>



Appendix 10: Example Communications Strategy Sheet for Businesses



## Business Communication Tools

Thanks for joining the Last Straw campaign. We would like you to use one (or more) of the following options to help communicate your commitment to sustainability to both your customers and staff.

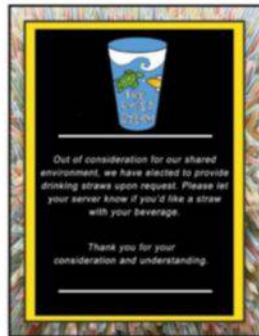


### Table Toppers:

Table toppers are a great way to reach all of your customers with your commitment to sustainability. You automatically build brand loyalty with each person who sits at your table.

### Menu Commentary:

For those that change their menus regularly, consider including a note about your commitment to reducing unnecessary plastic straws. We can help you create copy that fits the theme of your business.



### Window decals:

Window decals are small and easy to position for visibility. We recommend pairing a window decal with an additional outreach method.

### Certificate of recognition:

A certificate of recognition is a great way to show your customers that you've been recognized for your efforts.

Appendix 11: Example Business Certificate



*The Last Straw would like to recognize*

---

*for their efforts to reduce straw disposal. Over 500,000 million straws are disposed of daily in the USA. That's enough to wrap straws around the Earth's circumference 2.5 times a day! Thanks to restaurants like this one, we can work together to reduce unnecessary plastic waste in our community.*

*Please inform your server if you would like a straw with your drink.*

Appendix 12: Examples of Window Decals



### The Last Straw

---

*Out of consideration for our shared environment, we have elected to provide drinking straws upon request. Please let your server know if you'd like a straw with your beverage.*

*Thank you for your consideration and understanding.*

---



### The Last Straw

---

*Out of consideration for our shared environment, we have elected to provide drinking straws upon request. Please let your server know if you'd like a straw with your beverage.*

*Thank you for your consideration and understanding.*

---



### The Last Straw

---

*Out of consideration for our shared environment, we have elected to provide drinking straws upon request. Please let your server know if you'd like a straw with your beverage.*

*Thank you for your consideration and understanding.*

---



### The Last Straw

---

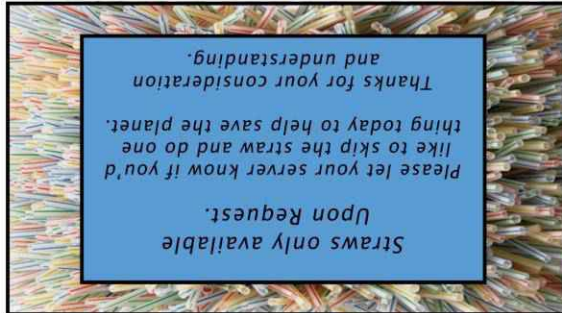
*Out of consideration for our shared environment, we have elected to provide drinking straws upon request. Please let your server know if you'd like a straw with your beverage.*

*Thank you for your consideration and understanding.*

---



Appendix 13: Table Tents



*Instructions*  
Print on card stock  
cut in half along trip line  
fold along fold lines  
table or staple at paper overlap  
display!

*Instructions*  
Print on card stock  
cut in half along trip line  
fold along fold lines  
table or staple at paper overlap  
display!