

HermosaBeachPatch

Styrofoam Ban in Hermosa Moves Forward

Local restaurants soon will no longer be able to wrap take-out orders in Styrofoam containers, Hermosa Beach City Council decides 3-2.

- By [Jacqueline Howard](#)
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Styrofoam food take-out containers soon will be part of Hermosa Beach's past, as the City Council [in a meeting Tuesday night](#) decided 3-2 to move forward with drafting a ban on using such containers in restaurants, as well as educating food vendors and customers about polystyrene.

Councilmen Michael DiVirgilio and Kit Bobko voted against the ban idea.

"This is a wise decision for this council for several reasons... [polystyrene] is a pervasive pollutant in our environment," said [Santa Monica Baykeeper](#) executive director Liz Crosson in the council meeting.

She added that when the substance becomes litter, money then is spent on beach clean-ups to remove the marine debris.

DiVirgilio said in the council meeting that he supported the effort to reduce marine debris, but a ban was "too aggressive."

Bobko agreed, suggesting that the city allow businesses to voluntarily phase out the use of Styrofoam through an incentives program, for example. "Why resort to the force of government so quickly," he asked.

Mayor Howard Fishman pointed out that none of the local businesses that contacted him regarding this issue opposed a ban.

The Hermosa Beach Green Task Force last year in September recommended that the city [prohibit the use of polystyrene foam containers](#) from being used in local restaurants.

After reviewing the group's proposal, the council then in May directed city staffers to clarify data and explore the possibility of a [public educational campaign](#) aimed at reducing polystyrene's use.

Then on Tuesday, months later, the issue was presented before the council again with more information on outreach and educational program options as well as the possible ban option.

Outreach would have included educating business owners and customers about recycling Styrofoam (which is rarely done) as well as its health risks, such as it has been classified as a [potential human carcinogen](#).

But local environmental advocates Tuesday night continued to encourage wiping out Styrofoam altogether, and one outspoken supporter stole the show.

Max Riley, a [Hermosa Valley School](#) third-grader, commanded the council chambers floor as he explained why he supported a polystyrene ban.

Max and his friends enjoy buying sandwiches from [Martha's 22nd Street Grill](#), which are packaged in Styrofoam containers and easy to take down to the beach, he told the council.

Even though Max and his friends make sure to close the containers while they go in the water, sometimes "the birds go over and rip the Styrofoams apart," he exclaimed, adding that the Styrofoam then "gets everywhere."

"So I'm asking, for me and my friends who play in the ocean and the dolphins we love to see in the ocean, to ban the Styrofoams," Max said.

The youngster got his wish.

Do you think moving forward with a Styrofoam ban is the right decision?