

SUMMARY OF THE LIST OF APPROVED ALTERNATIVES FOR PLASTIC PRODUCTS TO BE REGULATED BY THE TOWN OF LEE BEGINNING IN MAY 2017

In accordance with the bylaws, the Lee Board of Health has issued a list of approved alternatives, which includes examples of websites where products can be found and tips for finding acceptable items. This document summarizes the official list, which should be referred to for more complete information. The Board thinks that ample alternatives exist to most if not all the regulated products. Yet, it will consider additional alternatives and update this document as needed. If you have any questions, please contact Jim Wilusz, Executive Director of the Tri-Town Health Department (jim@tritownhealth.org; 413.243.5540).

Approved Alternatives to Foam and Rigid Polystyrene Products

- **Biodegradable/compostable alternatives:**

Besides plain, uncoated, brown, white, or off-white paper plates and cups, approved alternatives in this category require certification by the Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI) or by Belgium-based Vinçotte that products are compostable according to ASTM or European Union standards.

Two local/nearby suppliers that carry BPI-certified products are

- Lee Hardware (contact Fred Levine)
- Mansfield Paper Company, Inc. (Springfield, MA) – <http://mansfieldpaper.com/>

The official list of alternatives includes several more (with web addresses). Many companies sell “biodegradable” and “compostable” products but do not provide evidence of certified compliance with ASTM standards. Uncertified products are NOT approved.

The online BPI Product Catalog (<http://www.bpiworld.org/BPI-Public/Approved/1.html>) covers a full range of foam or rigid polystyrene product alternatives. Roughly 90 manufacturers produce certified items in one or more of the following categories: hot and cold cups, plates, bowls, serving trays, raw food trays, and containers. BPI continuously updates the catalog. When ordering or re-ordering products, refer to the catalog to ensure the products are still certified. The official alternatives list includes tips for searching for certified items.

- **Recyclable Alternatives:**

The Board of Health has approved the following items:

- Cardboard/paperboard – preferably unbleached/totally chlorine free, unlined or lined with a US Food and Drug Administration approved – and preferably bio-based – material
- Polypropylene drink and food containers (recycle symbol #5)
- Aluminum foil, trays, and containers
- Food wrap papers – preferably unbleached/totally chlorine free – coated with a US Food and Drug Administration approved – and preferably bio-based – material.

Approved Alternatives for Reusable Shopping Bags, Recyclable Paper Bags, and Raw Food and Bulk Item Bags

- **Reusable shopping bag alternatives:**

The Board of Health currently approves the use of the following materials in reusable shopping bags. The bags must meet all other specifications set forth in the bylaw.

- Polypropylene (woven or non-woven) - preferably with some recycled content (any materials used to laminate bags must be recyclable)
- Polyester (woven)
- Nylon
- Cotton (natural, recycled, or organic)
- Cotton canvas

- **Recyclable Paper Bags:**

Here are three nearby companies that sell bags meeting the bylaw's requirements (search for recycled paper bags or recycled paper shopping bags). The official alternatives list includes several others.

- Green Valley Packaging (CT-based) - <http://www.gvpackaging.com/>
- Mansfield Paper (Springfield, MA) - <https://www.mansfieldpaper.com/>
- Packaging Specialists (Newburyport, MA) - <http://pack-spec.com/>

- **Raw Food and Bulk Item Bags**

The following companies manufacture BPI certified compostable bags (<http://www.bpiworld.org/BPI-Public/Approved/1.html>).

- Al-pack
- Anhui Jumei Biological Technical Co., Ltd. – Ecopoly brand
- BioBag-Americas
- Eco Concept Service – Bagherra brand

The Board of Health also approves

- 100 percent (100%) recyclable paper made with at least forty percent (40%) postconsumer recycled material, which is available from multiple sources;
- compostable cellophane or other cellulosic material, one example being Eco Clear Compostable Bags from ClearBags (www.clearbags.com);
- compostable unbleached wax paper made with non-petroleum-based wax (the Board has not yet found products that fully comply with the definition in the bylaw, but on a temporary basis it approves these product types manufactured by If You Care (www.ifyoucare.com) and EcoCraft Packaging, from BagcraftPapercon, a subsidiary of Packaging Dynamics (www.bagcraft.com).

This list is not exhaustive and the market is rapidly changing, with new alternatives continually being developed. The Board recognizes that alternatives might be more limited in some areas than others, will consider alternatives not included in the list, and will provide exemptions where no approved alternatives yet exist. The bylaws also provide for deferments if switching to approved alternatives would cause an undue hardship.

Important notice: *the Board of Health has identified companies selling approved alternative products solely for informational purposes to assist establishments in finding compliant items that meet their needs. Neither the Board of Health nor its designee, the Tri-Town Health Department, endorses any company by including it in this document. Any company offering products that meet the specifications set forth in the by-laws and the official alternatives list and wanting to be included in the list should contact the Tri-Town Health Department and provide any requested information.*