

May 12, 2017



**Lee's plastics
reduction bylaws
go into effect!**

**Please bring reusable bags, mugs, and other
containers** when shopping or eating out. You'll
help the environment and local businesses.
To learn more visit:

**[www.lee.ma.us/recycling-greener-gateway-
committee](http://www.lee.ma.us/recycling-greener-gateway-committee)**



**Thank you for helping to make Lee an even
Greener Gateway to the Berkshires.**

What happens on May 12, 2017?

- Establishments will provide only reusable or paper bags, or cardboard boxes, and – for produce and bulk items – paper or compostable bags.
- Food and drinks will NO LONGER come in foam or rigid polystyrene containers.
- **When you go shopping, YOU may use any bags or containers you want!**

Learn about the bylaws and get transition tips so you'll be prepared

Please follow one of these links to access a wealth of information:

<http://www.lee.ma.us/recycling-greener-gateway-committee>

<http://www.lee.ma.us/tri-town-health-department/pages/thin-filmed-plastic-bag-and-polystyrene-initiative>

And please contact us if you have questions or suggestions for better supporting the community in making the transition.

Jim Wilusz, Executive Director
Tri-Town Health Department
jim@tritownhealth.org
413.243.5540

Peter Hofman, Chair
Lee Greener Gateway Committee
pdhofman12@gmnil.com
603.767.4250

Establishments: Please check before assuming

If you assume the bylaws don't apply to you, you might be wrong.

The bylaws cover anyone who provides goods – including food and/or beverages – directly to consumers in Lee, with or without charge. This includes sporadic (even single-event), temporary, part- or full-time operations that are commercial, non-profit, religious, educational, foundation-related, or governmental, regardless of where they are.

Please check before assuming. Review at least the bylaws (including the definitions) and the list of approved alternatives.

And if you think you can't comply...

The bylaws provide cushions for Establishments that can't immediately comply:

- **Exemptions** for so long as no approved alternatives exist for regulated products
- **Deferments** – in six-month increments up to two years – if compliance would cause an undue hardship

In both cases, Establishments must provide information required by the Lee Board of Health, which will make the final decision.

The bag reduction bylaw

Consumers...**PLEASE**



Bring your own reusable (ideally cloth) bag whenever you shop. You'll help the environment **and** local businesses.

You'll find plenty of options for the thin plastic shopping bags

There will still be plastic bags. And the Lee Greener Gateway Committee has posted practical tips for meeting household needs with other options. You can find them here:



[http://www.lee.ma.us/sites/leema/files/uploads/practical
alternatives to thin-film bags4 - 1-16-17.pdf](http://www.lee.ma.us/sites/leema/files/uploads/practical_alternatives_to_thin-film_bags4_-_1-16-17.pdf)

If you have suggestions for more options, please let us know and we'll post them.

We're helping people make the transition

If you're served by the Food Pantry, the Literacy Network, the Council on Aging, or the Berkshire Immigrant Center, you can get a **free** reusable bag from them (we gave them 200 of these reusable bags).

You can also buy these bags (just \$4) at Carr Hardware, Karen Keenan's, Lee Hardware, Paperdilly, Zabian's, and the Outlets.



And if you participate in the SNAP or WIC programs, Establishments cannot charge you for a shopping bag (their choice – either a recyclable paper bag or reusable shopping bag).

Treat your reusable bags well and they'll last a lifetime

A single, high-quality reusable bag can last for years and replace up to 1,000 thin-film plastic bags. But you have to treat it well.



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To see some tips for ensuring a safe, long life for your reusable bags, please follow this link:

[http://www.lee.ma.us/sites/leema/files/uploads/reusable_bag_insert4 - for lg2c bags - 1-26-17.pdf](http://www.lee.ma.us/sites/leema/files/uploads/reusable_bag_insert4_-_for_lg2c_bags_-_1-26-17.pdf)

If you have additional tips, please let us know and we'll post them.

Establishments: Please check before assuming – Example

If you assume you're in compliance with the plastic bag bylaw because you provide non-plastic reusable bags or paper bags, for example, you might not be. The bylaw includes specific bag and labeling requirements. For example –

- Recyclable paper bags must be 100% recyclable, contain a minimum of 40% postconsumer recycled paper content, and have visible labels on the outside that include the word “recyclable,” the name and country of the manufacturer, and the percentage of post-consumer recycled paper content.
- Reusable shopping bags must meet more extensive specifications and labeling requirements.

So, **please check before assuming.** Review at least the bylaws (including the definitions) and the list of approved alternatives.

Ask fellow business owners for help making the transition

Some businesses in Lee either never used or stopped using plastic bags and polystyrene containers. The following owners have agreed to serve as resources. So, if you have questions, contact one of them.

➤ From Chez Nous:

Rachel Portnoy - rachel@cheznousbistro.com
Franck Tessier - tessierfranck@hotmail.com
413.243.6397

➤ From Starving Artist Creperie & Cafe:

Emmy Davis - ekmcmmanmon@yahoo.com
413.329.4995

➤ From Lee Hardware

Joey Scapin - leehardware@verizon.net
413.243.0786

The polystyrene reduction bylaw

Consumers:
Think reusable for more than bags.



You might even bring your own containers when food shopping or eating out.

Establishments: Please check before assuming – Example

If you provide food or drinks and assume you're complying with the bylaw simply because you stopped using polystyrene products, you might be wrong.

The bylaw requires establishments to use alternatives to polystyrene that are approved by the Lee Board of Health.

Again, please check before assuming. Review at least the bylaws (including the definitions) and the list of approved alternatives.

Fortunately, many options exist

Last November the Lee Board of Health adopted a **list of approved alternatives** to polystyrene containers, ranging from common items like aluminum foil and cardboard to newer non-petroleum-based ones.

You can find the full list here:

http://www.lee.ma.us/sites/leema/files/uploads/list_of_alternatives.pdf

The summary is posted here:

[http://www.lee.ma.us/sites/leema/files/uploads/alternatives_list_summary - 11-17-16.pdf](http://www.lee.ma.us/sites/leema/files/uploads/alternatives_list_summary_-_11-17-16.pdf)

The Board of Health doesn't endorse any product and is willing to consider ones not on the list. Apply to the Tri-Town Health Department.

We hope everyone will be on board...

We're doing what we can to help everyone make a smooth transition.

Tri-Town Health Department staff will check for compliance during regular inspections and will respond to citizen complaints.

The bylaws provide for a progression of penalties starting with a warning, then escalating fines, and – for repeat and persistent offenses – possible license/ permit denial, suspension, or revocation. We sure hope it doesn't get to that!

Thank you!

We appreciate your going through this slide show and hope it will help you have a smooth transition to life with fewer non-essential plastics.



With each of us doing our part, we'll help improve our community and the surrounding area and minimize business disruption.

Let's work together to make Lee an even Greener Gateway to the Berkshires!

