

A Resolution to Endorse the Ordinance Limiting Single Use Plastics in Los Angeles County Unincorporated Areas

WHEREAS, the Ordinance Limiting Single Use Plastics in Los Angeles County Unincorporated Areas would require the elimination of the use of single-use plastic food service ware and ensure that materials used for disposable products are recyclable or compostable; and

WHEREAS, the Ordinance Limiting Single Use Plastics in Los Angeles County Unincorporated Areas is currently being considered by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and if passed, would phase out single-use plastics in Los Angeles County; and

WHEREAS, there is growing alarm about the prevalence of plastic pollution in our environment, and its lasting negative impacts for our ecosystems and public health; and

WHEREAS, plastic does not biodegrade, which means that virtually every piece of plastic that has ever escaped into the environment will still be out there for hundreds of years, collecting in our rivers and oceans at a rate of 14 million tons a year; and

WHEREAS, plastic items can break into smaller pieces called microplastics and as a result, scientists have discovered plastic pollution in every corner of the globe, from Lake Tahoe¹ to the marine sanctuary of Monterey Bay², and even our food, our beverages, and inside our bodies³, potentially exposing us to hazardous compounds and additives; and

WHEREAS, single-use, disposable plastic items make up nearly half of plastic use, items like plastic foam cups and containers, plastic grocery bags, plastic straws and utensils, plastic bottles, and plastic packaging; and

WHEREAS, producing so much single-use plastic is wasteful and resource intensive, as the continued extraction and refinement of fossil fuels to make plastics releases harmful emissions and⁴ toxic substances into our air and water; and

¹ *Los Angeles Times* “Microplastics are found in Lake Tahoe’s waters for first time ever”:

<https://www.latimes.com/environment/story/2019-08-26/lake-tahoe-microplastic-pollution-detected>

² *Mercury News* “Levels of plastic pollution in Monterey Bay rival those in Great Pacific Garbage Patch”:

<https://www.mercurynews.com/2019/06/06/monterey-bay-is-littered-with-tiny-pieces-of-plastic-groundbreaking-new-study-finds/>

³ *National Geographic* “In a first, microplastics found in human poop”:

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/article/news-plastics-microplastics-human-feces>

⁴ UCLA Policy 809 : Single-Use Plastics: <http://www.adminpolicies.ucla.edu/APP/Number/809.0>

WHEREAS, over 95 percent of plastic *isn't* recycled, and unrecyclable plastic items can clog recycling equipment and contaminate recyclable materials; and

WHEREAS, the financial impacts caused by plastic pollution have resulted in local taxpayers in California spending more than \$420 Million annually in ongoing efforts to clean up and prevent plastic and other litter from entering and polluting our waterways; and

WHEREAS, UCLA is leading⁴ on plastics policy to protect the environment and our community, and can set the standard for the rest of Los Angeles County to follow; and

WHEREAS, the Ordinance Limiting Single Use Plastics in Los Angeles County Unincorporated Areas would phase out single-use plastics in Los Angeles County; and

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED, that we the UCLA Undergraduate Students Association Council (USAC) stand in strong support of the passage of the Ordinance Limiting Single Use Plastics in Los Angeles County Unincorporated Areas to further reduce plastic pollution and its impacts on the County's ocean, coastal and freshwater environments, and further protect the communities of The Greater Los Angeles Area.