

**SUMMARY**

In March 2021, Governor Northam signed [Executive Order 77: Virginia Leading by Example to Reduce Plastic Pollution and Solid Waste](#), which requires all state agencies, including institutions of higher education to cease buying, selling, and distributing single-use plastic and polystyrene food service containers, single-use plastic straws and cutlery, disposable plastic bags, and single-use plastic water bottles by July 21, 2021. The order also calls for agencies to phase-out the use of all other single-use plastics by 2025. This order is a positive step toward making our whole Commonwealth cleaner and our economy more sustainable.

The goal is to eliminate most single-use plastics at state agencies, colleges and universities; impose a near-term ban on several common but unnecessary disposable plastics; and require the phase out of other items by 2025.

**SINGLE-USE PLASTICS AND POLYSTYRENE ELIMINATION TIMELINE**

**Single-use Plastic Water Bottles:** Includes single-use plastic water bottles up to and including 34 ounces. Alternatives include refillable water bottles, tap water, water bottle filling stations, paper or aluminum containers.

- Current inventory of bottles will be depleted
- Agency and contractors will stop purchasing new items as of July 2021
- Concessions, vending, and some national brands will be phased-out by December 2022 (pending DEQ approval), with proactive strategies to reduce to the greatest extent possible in the near term.
- All plastic bottles by 2025 (with limited potential exemptions or extensions for lines not currently offered in aluminum cans, pending regulatory approval)

**Disposable Plastic Bags:** Includes shopping bags and garbage/recycling bin liners. Alternatives include reusable bags; “no bag, please;” or paper bags.

- Current inventory of disposable plastic shopping bags will be depleted
- Agency and contractors will stop purchasing new items as of July 2021
- Small trash and recycling bin liners phased-out by July 2022 by eliminating small office and classroom bins
- Large Trash and recycling bin liners phased-out by December 2025 with proactive strategies to reduce the number of liners.
- For agency direct procurement, VDC (mandatory source) will source alternatives

**Single-use Plastic and Polystyrene Food Service Containers:** Includes plates, cups, bowls, and hinged containers. Alternatives include reusable and compostable containers.

- Current inventory of containers will be depleted
- Agency and contractors will stop purchasing new items as of July 2021
- For agency direct procurement, VDC (mandatory source) will source alternatives

**Single-use Disposable Plastic Straws and Cutlery:** Includes straws, forks, spoons, knives, and stirrers. Alternatives include reusable items; compostable cutlery; or “no straw/utensil, please.”

- Current inventory will be depleted
- All straws by July 2021 (alternatives will be available upon request)
- For agency direct procurement, VDC (mandatory source) will source alternatives

**Other Plastics and Polystyrene:** (balloons, glitter, coffee pods, packing material, etc.)

- Includes plastics #1-7, such as beverage bottles, food containers and wrap, single-use coffee pods; cleaning supply containers; promotional items; packaging materials; and single-use gloves.
- *Laboratory and medical supplies are excluded.*
- Acceptable alternatives include reusable, compostable, or plastics that are recycled in a closed-loop system (recycled into the same materials).
- Per EO77, the Phase-out plan is:
  - a 25% reduction by the end of 2022
  - 50% by the end of 2023
  - 75% by the end of 2024, and
  - 100% by the end of 2025

**HOW DO I PROCURE COMPLIANT PRODUCTS PER EO77?**

- Note that Procurement Rules and Policies have not changed. The mandatory sources (VDC, VCE, etc) should be the first stop to procure any items on a mandatory sourcing list. Both agencies are prepared to provide waivers for agencies to comply with the EO if they are unable to provide compliant products.
- As a contractor, NOVA’s new food vendor at Annandale– [Surefire Catering](#) – is required to comply with the Executive Order. Additionally, per the existing terms of their contract, most of their serving materials are already in compliance. They can support College-wide catering needs and provide appropriate products such as water in aluminum cans and compostable or biodegradable utensils and serving containers;
- As part of event planning, consider offering reusable bottles, cups, and/or utensils as giveaway items. Through eVA, there are options to procure branded products. Campus Student Life or College Auxiliary Services can assist with this procurement;
- To provide water for event attendees, some options are:
  - NOVA Auxiliary Services has a few of these 5 gallon coolers that event organizers can fill with water and ice for attendees to refill their own container or a provided paper cup – email [novacas@nvcc.edu](mailto:novacas@nvcc.edu) to request.
  - [This company \(Open Water\)](#) offers canned water. [They are in eVA as “Green Sheep”](#). (Surefire has access to these same cans if you were to place a catering order with them);
- For utensils (forks, knives, spoons) and serveware (plates, bowls, cups, containers) that comply with the Executive Order (compostable, biodegradable), this company ([Acme Paper & Supply](#)) has several options and [they are also in eVA](#).



**HOW CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT EXECUTIVE ORDER 77?**

The VCCS response to Phase 1 of the Executive Order is available here. (link to the pdf)

The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality’s website is a good source for additional information: <https://www.deq.virginia.gov/get-involved/pollution-prevention/greening-of-government/eo-77>.

If you have reviewed all resources, please send any additional questions to Rob Johnson, NOVA’s Director of Sustainability and Auxiliary Services – [rojohanson@nvcc.edu](mailto:rojohanson@nvcc.edu).