



Dear members of the Needham Select Board,

My name is Evan Raskin, I am the National Campaign Manager for EARTHDAY.ORG, the official organizers of Earth Day worldwide and environmental action year-round. I am also a member of the Needham community; this town is where I grew up and where my family continues to reside to this day.

I write to you today to inform that EARTHDAY.ORG has given its official endorsement of the Warrant Article 45: CITIZENS' PETITION – SINGLE USE PLASTICS BAN BY-LAW to ban certain single-use plastic items, to be voted on at the May 2024 town meeting.

The theme for Earth Day 2024 is Planet Vs Plastics, which calls for a 60% reduction in plastic production by 2040 and highlights the immense ecological and public health crises caused by human exposure to plastic chemicals. Plastic pollution has permeated every corner of the globe, from the tallest mountains to the deepest oceans, and even inside our own bodies.

A rapidly growing body of medical research has found connections between the ingestion of plastic chemicals and health issues such as hormone disruptions, neurological damage, diabetes and obesity, and even some forms of cancer. Alarmingly, plastic exposure is especially dangerous to the reproductive cycle: our Babies Vs Plastics report (as seen in over 350 news publications), which compiles the global medical consensus on how plastics affect new parents and their offspring, found strong links between plastic chemical exposure and birth defects, impotence, infertility, miscarriages, and other reproductive issues. In the United States alone, \$250 billion is spent annually in healthcare costs due to plastics-related illnesses.

Luckily, the solution is simple: ban the distribution of single-use plastics in Needham's commercial businesses, starting with the items proposed in the Citizens Petition. There is already a proven track record of success for single-use plastic bans in Massachusetts; for example, 61 municipalities across the state have already successfully implemented bans on polystyrene. Also known as styrofoam, polystyrene poses a particular threat to the community due to its propensity to break down into microplastics which are toxic to the human body and are virtually impossible to clean up once polluted.

For too long, we've allowed the crisis of plastic pollution to harm our waterways, our wildlife, our neighborhoods, and our families. It's time to join the modern world in prioritizing environmental and public health. It's time to support a ban on single-use plastics.

Sincerely,

Evan Raskin,
National Campaign Manager

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