

From Plastic Waste to Policy Change:

The Power of Partnership & Community Action in Hudson

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Introduction & Overview

- **Who are we?**
- **What is a By-law?**
- **Learning Objectives:**
 - Understand some of the health impacts of plastic waste
 - Learn how partnerships can drive health initiatives
 - Explore Hudson's path from advocacy to policy



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Hudson Health Department



Setting the Scene: Hudson, MA

- Small, engaged community of ~20,000 residents
- Strong tradition of civic involvement and environmental consciousness
- Collaborative Health Department and active community organizations
- 2021 winner of “Best Main Street in America”



The Catalyst for Action

- Green Hudson identified plastic use as a growing concern
- Health Department recognized Public Health implications
- Shared Mission: Promote Health and Sustainability
- Early discussions laid the foundation for collaboration
- Continuation from Plastic Bag Ban

Problem
identified

Partnership
formed

Action
planned



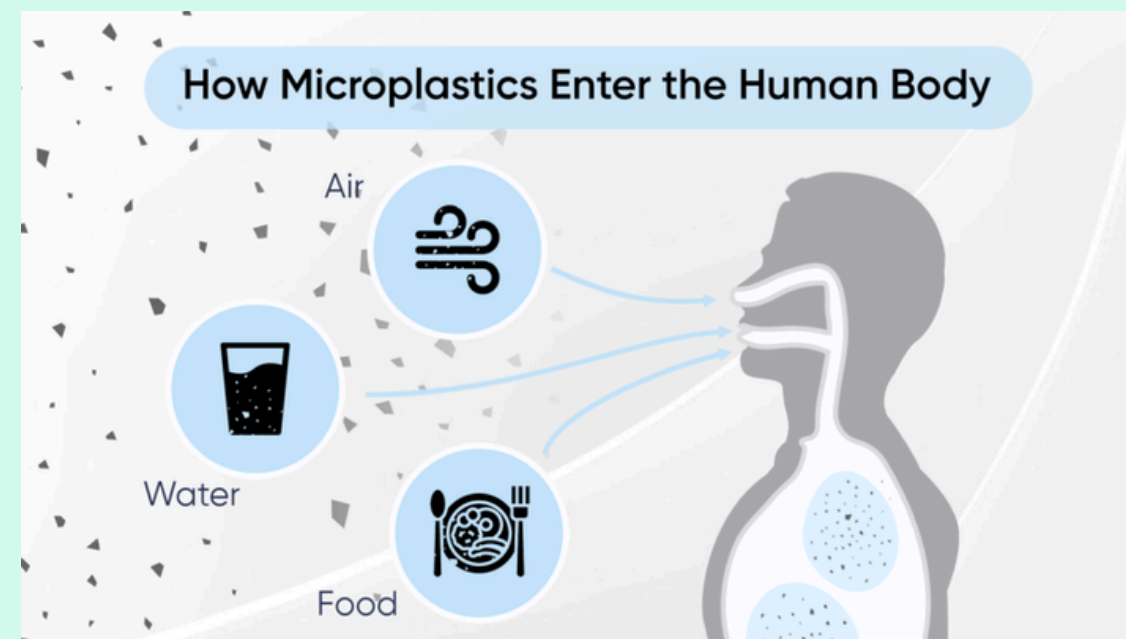
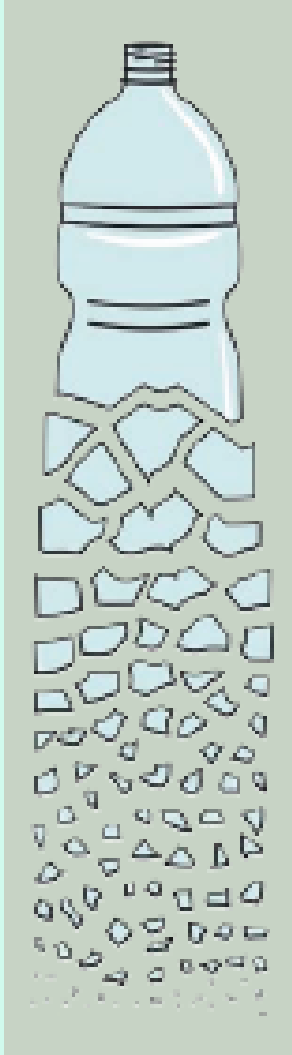
The Problem: Plastics & Public Health

- **Environmental Concerns:**

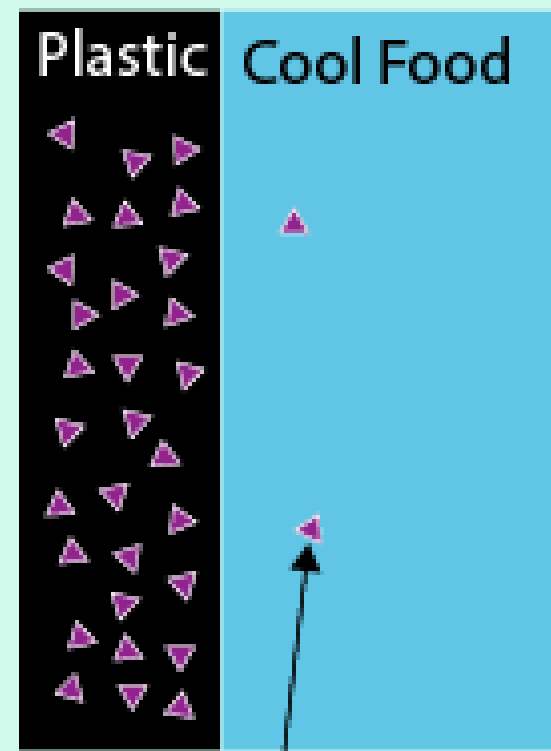
- Most plastic goes into landfills, the environment, or is incinerated. Less than 15% gets recycled!
- Black plastic can NOT be recycled
- Because plastics are made from fossil fuels - oil, coal, gas - they contribute to global warming
- Plastic breaks down into small nano-plastics that persist in the environment for hundreds of years. The width of 1 human hair = 1,000 nano-plastics

- **Health Concerns:**

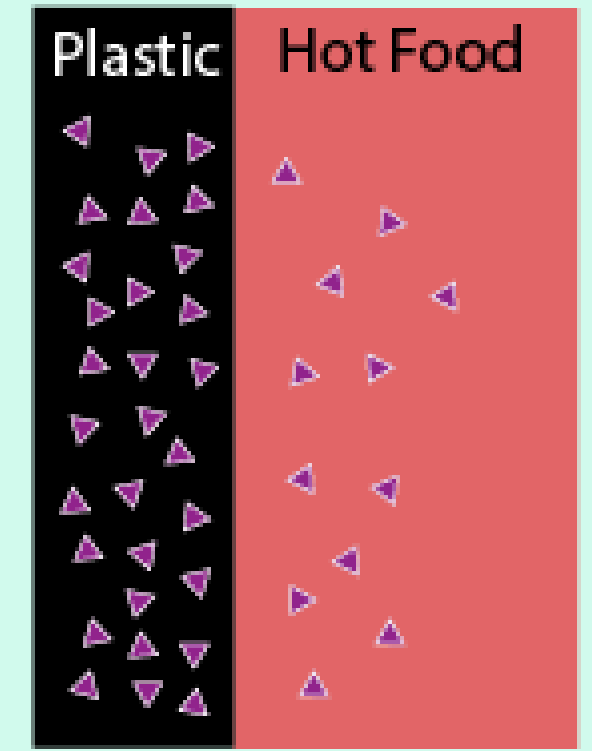
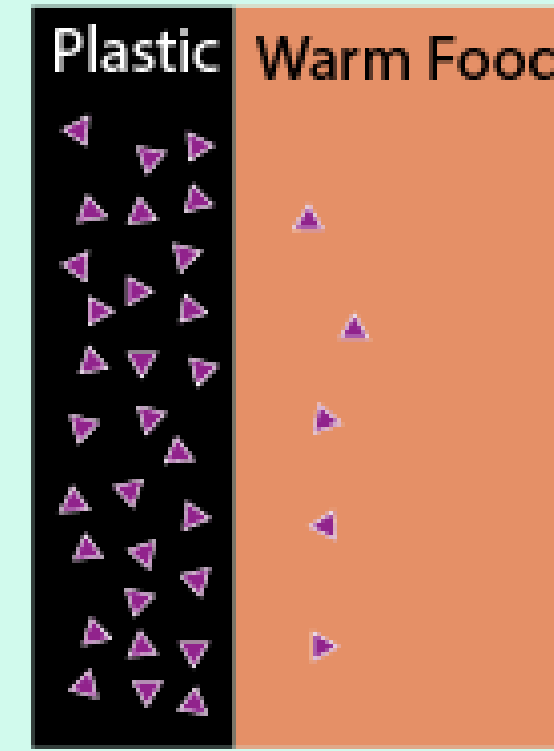
- Humans may be consuming as much as 21 grams of nano-plastics a week = 1 credit card
- Nano-plastics found in humans' blood, embedded in lungs & brain, placentas, breast milk, testicles, semen



Black Plastics, Temperature & Food



Leachable
Chemical

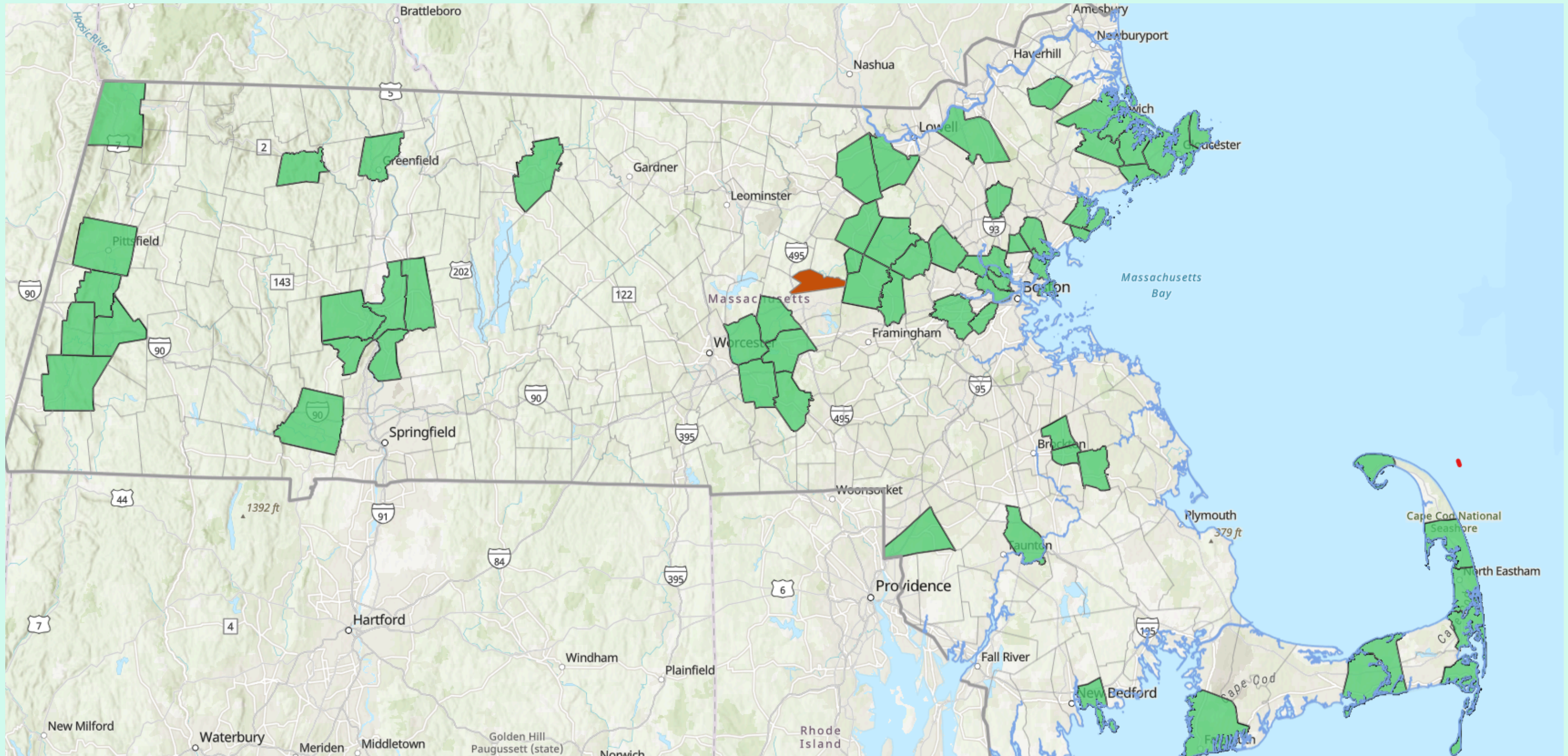


Increased Temperature

Increased Leaching

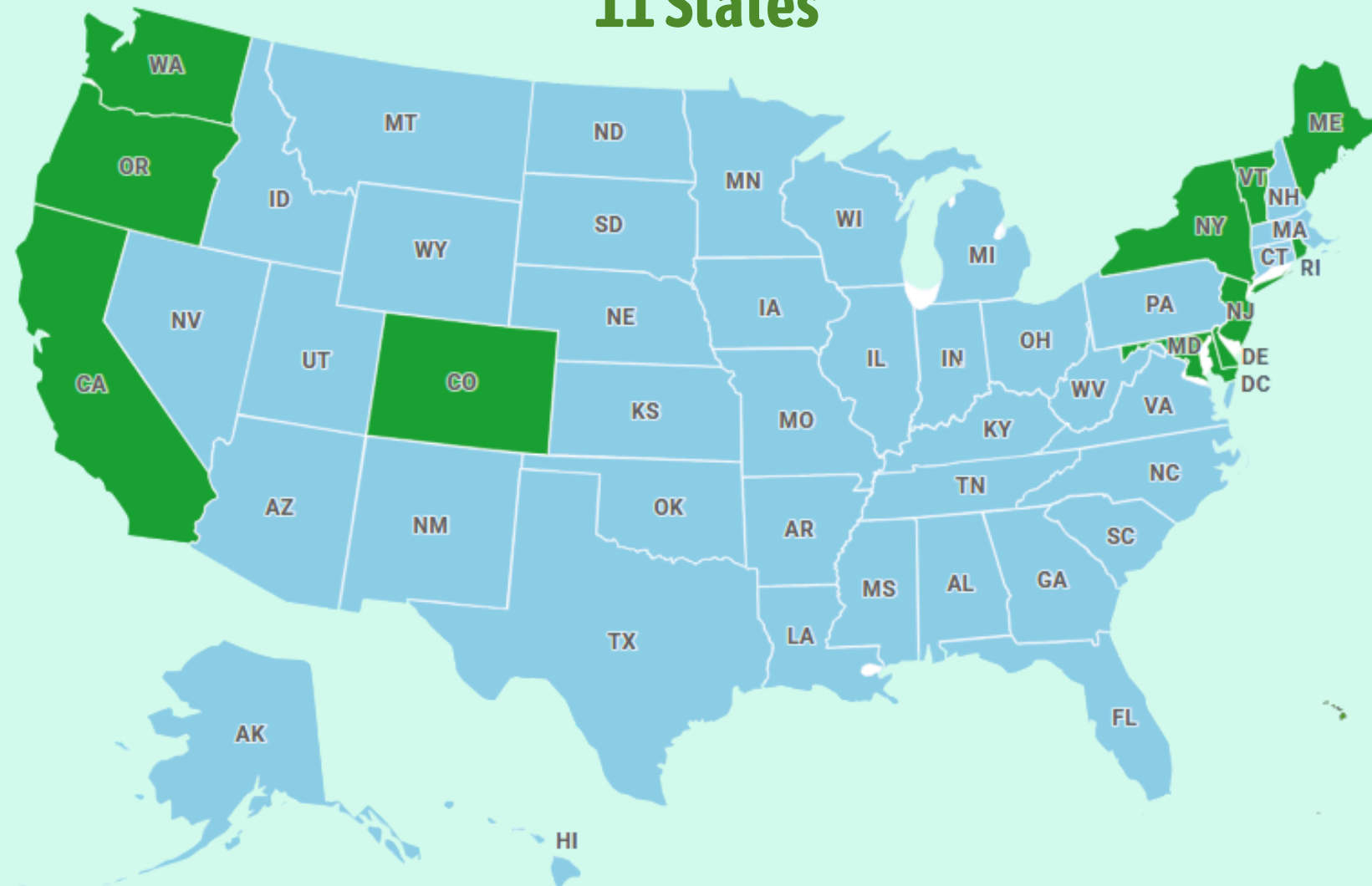
Polystyrene Bans in MA

66 Cities & Towns | 12 Counties | Over 1.5 million people

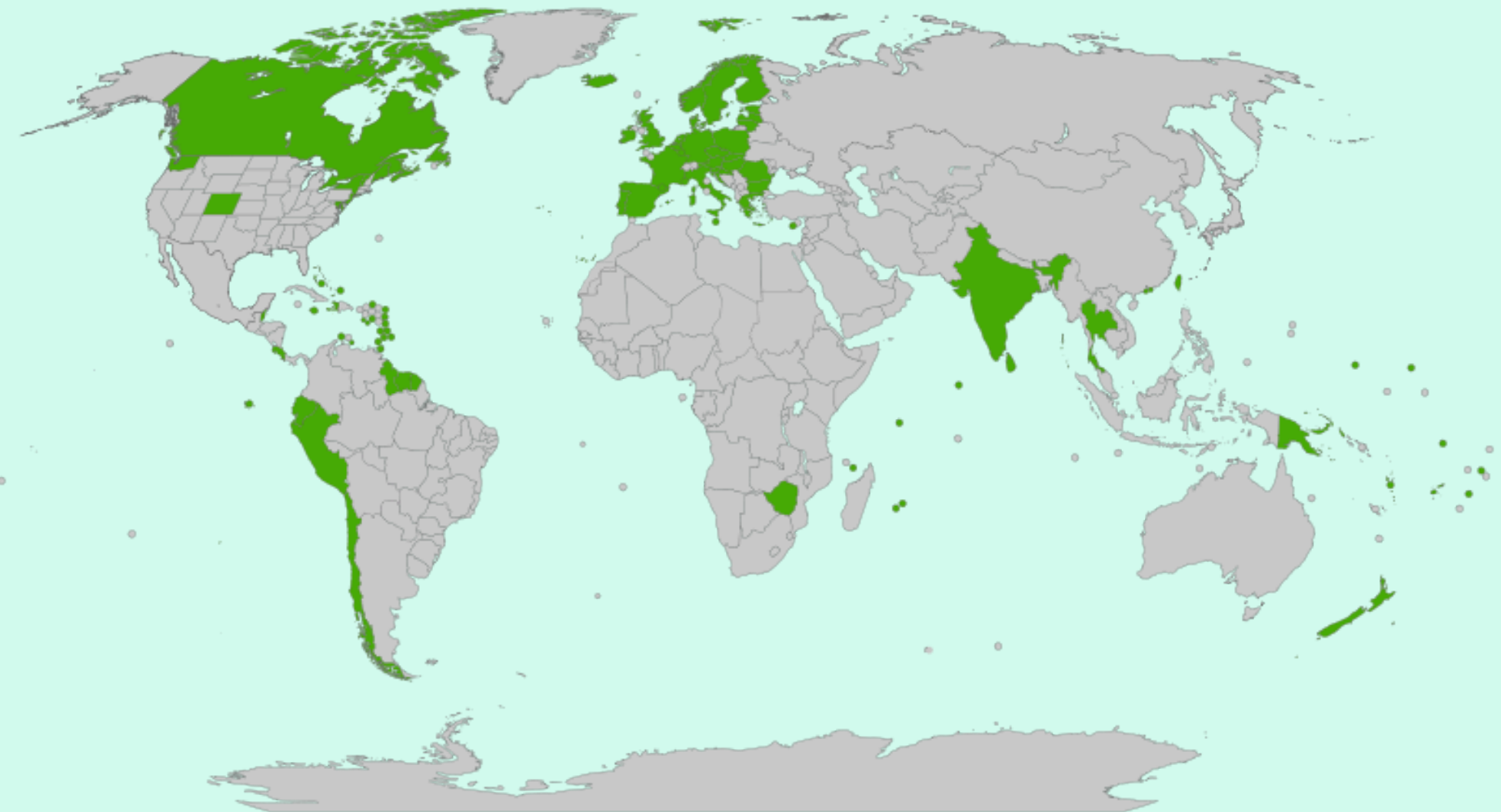


Polystyrene Bans Outside of MA

11 States



50+ Countries



Impact on Hudson Businesses

These charts show the number of MA towns with plastic reduction bylaws that each chain already has locations in

Restaurant Chain:	Subway	Burger King	McDonalds	99 Restaurant	Applebees	Alltown Fresh	110 Grill - Berlin	KFC
# of MA towns with plastic reduction bylaws that chain currently has locations in:	28	3	4	8	4	0	6	1

Restaurant Chain:	Honey Dew Donuts	Dunkin	Starbucks	Panera Bread	Qdoba	Domino's	Taco Bell
# of MA towns with plastic reduction bylaws that chain currently has locations in:	11	50	41	10	2	29	11

Store Chain:	Market Basket	Stop n Shop	Walmart Super Center	Shaw's	Tedeschi's
# of MA towns with plastic reduction bylaws that chain currently has locations in:	6	24	9	7	1

Building the Partnership

- Green Hudson approached the BOH in 2023
 - Bad timing! BOH wasn't ready.
- Green Hudson continued working on it...
- Green Hudson returned to the BOH a year later in 2024
 - Better timing! New Board members.
- BOH unanimously agreed to sponsor the By-law and bring it to Town Meeting in May 2025!



Non-Recyclable Plastics Reduction By-law

The Bylaw would prohibit:

- ❌ Food establishments in Hudson from using, selling, or otherwise distributing either polystyrene in foam or extruded form, rigid black plastic food service ware (e.g. cups, clam shells, plates) or knives, forks and spoons.
- ❌ Food establishments in Hudson from distributing plastic utensils, straws, stirrers, splash sticks and chopsticks. Food establishments may distribute non-plastic straws, stirrers, splash sticks or chopsticks only upon customer request.
- ❌ Retail establishments in Hudson of greater than 10,000 square feet from selling disposable plastic straws, stirrers, splash sticks or chopsticks unless non-plastic or reusable alternatives are also available and displayed nearby.
- ❌ Retail establishments in Hudson from selling polystyrene packing materials including but not limited to packing peanuts.



Effective Date: January 1, 2026



Engaging the Community

- In-person visits from Green Hudson
- Green Hudson Community Forum
- Listening Sessions with Health Department
- Online Survey
- Translated materials in Portuguese and Spanish
- Leveraged BOH's relationships with businesses
- Email and social media alerts
- Ongoing outreach right up to May Town Meeting



Resources for Hudson Businesses

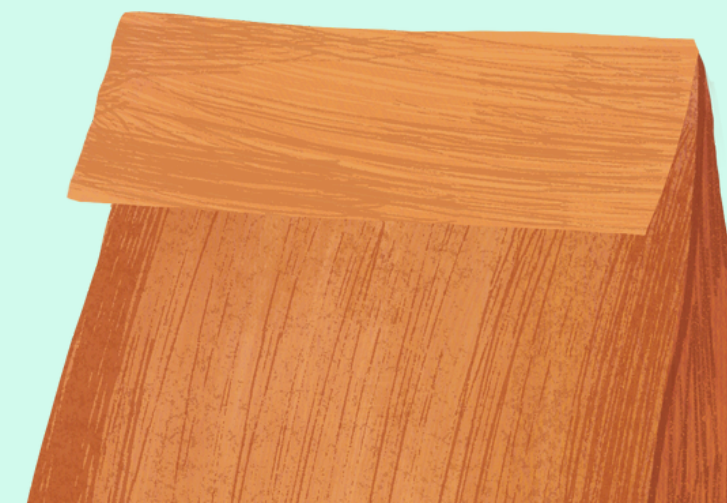


FREE ASSISTANCE FOR BUSINESSES & INSTITUTIONS

RecyclingWorks MA is funded by Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP),
delivered under contract by the Center for EcoTechnology



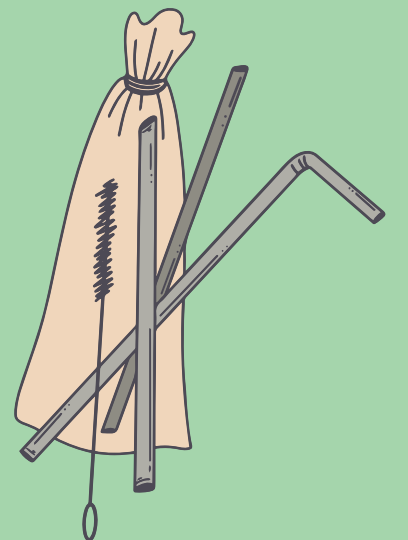
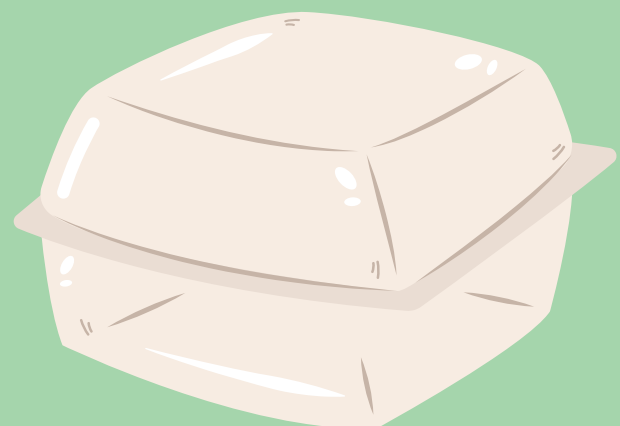
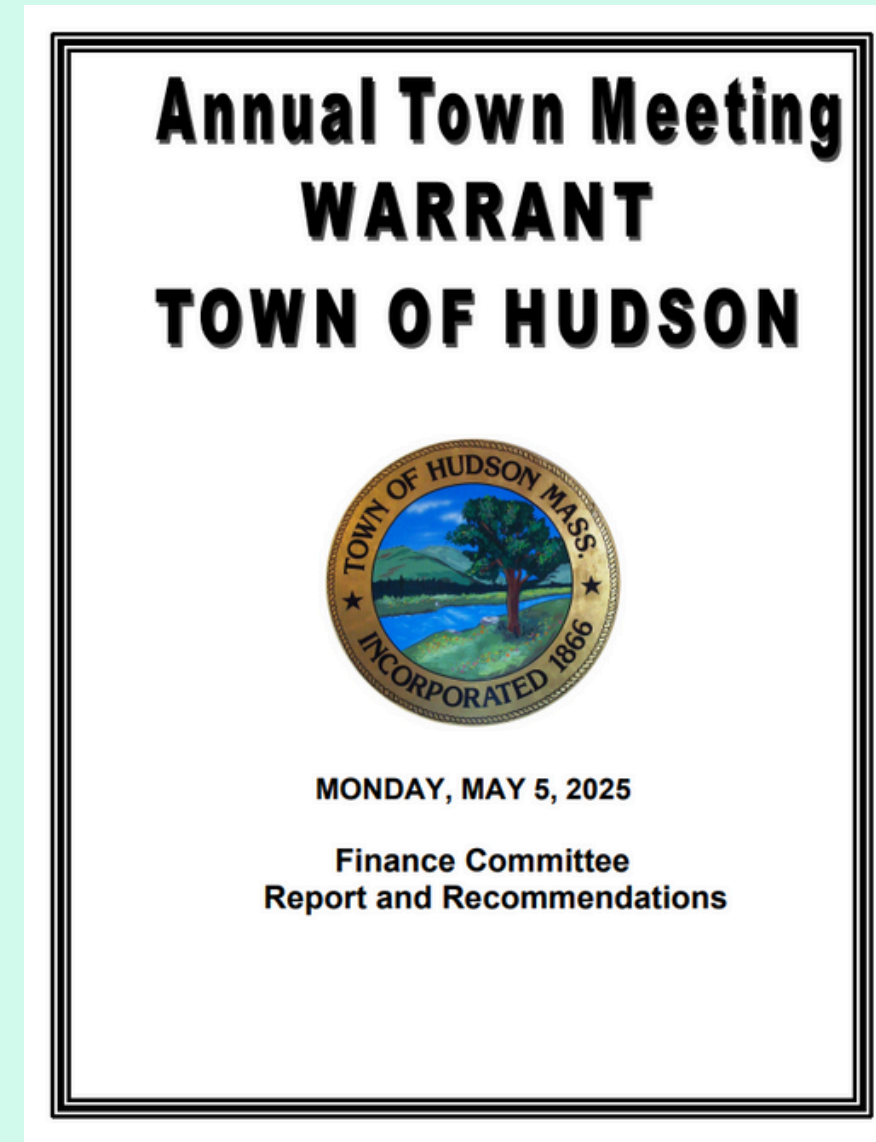
recyclingworksma.com



Annual Town Meeting

BIG Town Meeting with an Override vote on the Warrant!

- Green Hudson members handed out info on the By-law
- Gave out reusable straws
- Summarized the By-law for the audience
- Floor opened to attendees for questions and comments



ARTICLE 24 Amend General By-Laws: Non-Recyclable Plastic Reduction

To see if the Town will vote to amend the General By-Laws as follows, or take any other action relative thereto:

1. By establishing a new Article XIII, entitled "Non-Recyclable Plastic Reduction By-Law," to read as follows:

ARTICLE XIII NON-RECYCLABLE PLASTIC REDUCTION BY-LAW

Section 1. Statement of Purpose

1.1 For purposes of this By-Law, certain words and phrases shall appear in capitalized form. Certain words and phrases are defined in Section 2. Unless the context clearly indicates otherwise, each capitalized term shall have the meaning set forth therein.

1.2 Disposable Food Service Ware – such as takeout containers, Utensils, straws, and trays – made of Foam Polystyrene, solid polystyrene, and black solid plastics can have a detrimental effect on the environment and pose potential health hazards;

1.3 Foam Polystyrene, black solid polystyrene, and disposable Black Plastic Utensils are not Biodegradable, Compostable, or recyclable in the Town of Hudson;

1.4 It is the intent of the Town of Hudson, acting through its Board of Health, to eliminate the use of foam polystyrene, black solid polystyrene, and Black Plastic in Food Service Ware and packaging by all Food and retail Establishments within the Town by January 1, 2026. This By-Law further seeks to promote the use of less toxic, more durable, reusable, recyclable, Biodegradable, and/or Compostable alternatives.

Passed by a majority!!!

Next Steps

- Submit to the Attorney General's Office for approval
- Notify all businesses of the new By-law effective 1/1/26
- Market Basket Requested an exemption
- Mailed to all permit holders with their annual reminder to renew permits
- Hudson Public Schools requested an extension

BUT WAIT!



ARTICLE 5 Amend General By-Laws: Non-Recyclable Plastic Reduction By-Law

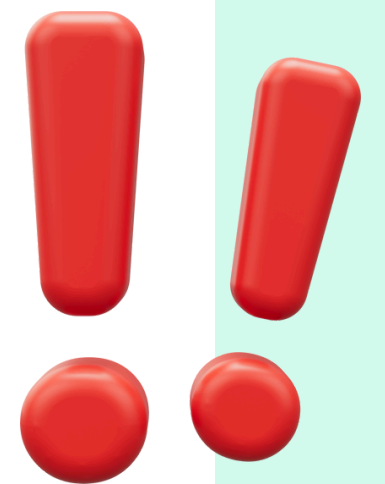
To see if the Town will vote to amend the Town's General Bylaws, Article XIII – Non-Recyclable Plastic Reduction By-Law, Section 3.1(b) Regulated Conduct, as follows (additions shown in bold, deletions shown as strikeouts):

3.1. After January 1, 2026, Food Establishments in the Town of Hudson may not:

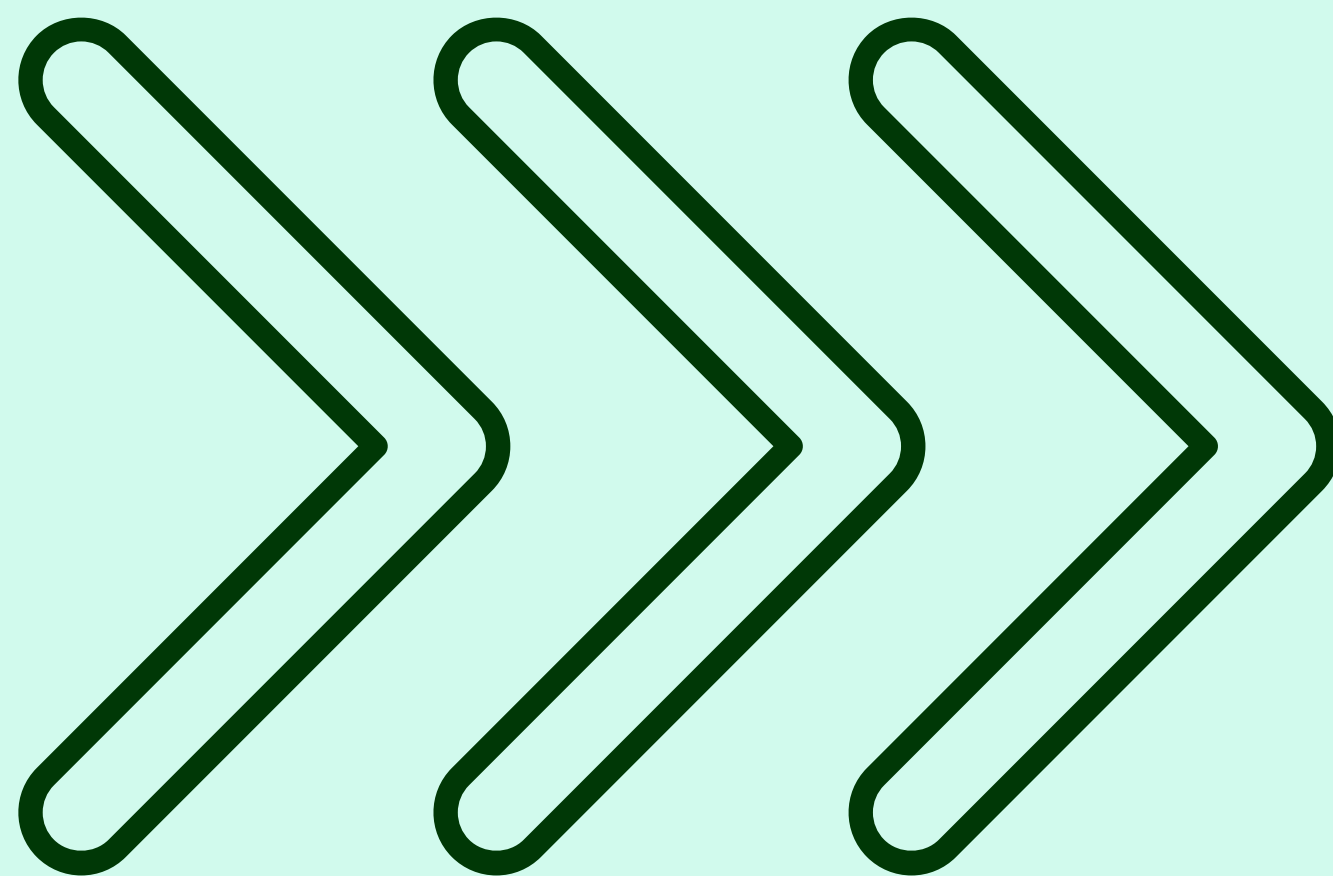
- a. use, sell, or otherwise distribute Disposable Food Service Ware, **which includes Disposable Plastic Utensils**; or
- b. provide a ~~Disposable Plastic Utensil or single-use condiment container~~ **Compostable and Biodegradable Food Service Ware or single-use condiments** to a customer, except upon that customer's specific request for such items or if the item is selected by a customer from a self-service dispenser.

or take any other action relative thereto.

Board of Health



To be continued



THIS or THAT?



Thank You!

Questions?

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