

Introduced by: Councilmember Clay

CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND

RESOLUTION 2009-24

SUPPORTING THE YOUNG ACTIVISTS CLUB OF PINEY BRANCH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN ADVOCATING FOR REUSABLE LUNCH TRAYS AND OTHER DURABLE FOOD SERVICE PRODUCTS AT THE SCHOOL

WHEREAS, the Piney Branch Elementary School's PTA-sponsored Young Activists Club is working to eliminate single-use disposable polystyrene lunch trays and other throwaway food service ware at its school; and

WHEREAS, the Young Activists Club has researched the issue and found that polystyrene foam is a non-biodegradable substance commonly used as food service ware in the public schools operating in the City of Takoma Park; and

WHEREAS, while polystyrene foam is a common environmental pollutant, there continues to be no meaningful recycling of polystyrene foam food service ware; and

WHEREAS, affordable, durable, and reusable food service ware products such as trays and flatware are easily available; and

WHEREAS, many schools and institutions across the United States and the world rely on these durable products and their use has demonstrated a corresponding reduction in waste disposal costs and negative environmental consequences; and

WHEREAS, polystyrene foam is notorious as a pollutant that breaks down into smaller, non-biodegradable pieces that are ingested by marine life and other wildlife, thus harming or killing them; and

WHEREAS, a 1986 EPA report on solid waste named the polystyrene manufacturing process as the fifth largest creator of hazardous waste in the United States; and

WHEREAS, in the product manufacturing process as well as the use and disposal of the products, the energy consumption, green house gas effect and total environmental effect of polystyrene's environmental impacts were second highest, behind aluminum, according to the California Integrated Waste management Board; and

WHEREAS, styrene is a suspected carcinogen and neurotoxin which potentially threatens human health; and

WHEREAS, styrene has been detected in the fat tissue of every man, woman and child tested by the EPA in the 1986 study; and

WHEREAS, the general public is not typically warned of any potential hazard, particularly in the immigrant and non-English -speaking community; and

WHEREAS, due to these concerns over 100 U.S. cities have banned polystyrene foam service ware, and many local businesses and several national corporations have successfully replaced polystyrene foam and other non-biodegradable food service with affordable, safe and reusable products; and

WHEREAS, restricting the use of polystyrene foam trays and plastic ware and replacing single use, petroleum-based, non-recyclable trays with durable and reusable trays and flatware products in the Piney Branch Elementary School will further protect the public health and safety of the students and citizens of Takoma Park, the natural environment, waterways and wildlife, and would advance the Council's goal of developing a sustainable city.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Council of the City of Takoma Park commends the members of the Young Activists Club of Piney Branch Elementary School for their work in analyzing the issues and making the connection between the use of petroleum-based disposable food service products and the costs to humans, the environment, and the climate related to the use of these products; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the City Council supports the Piney Branch Elementary School, its PTA, and the Young Activists Club in their proposal to become a pilot school in replacing single use polystyrene trays and flatware with durable, reusable trays, flatware, and a dishwashing system before the start of the 2009-2010 academic year; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the City Council asks the administration and staff of Montgomery County Public Schools to support the efforts of the PTA and the Young Activists Club by restricting the use of single use polystyrene trays and flatware and replacing them with durable and reusable trays, flatware, and a dishwashing system; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, pending completion of the pilot year, the City Council supports provision of funding from Montgomery County Public Schools to facilitate continuation of the program.

Adopted this 8th day of June, 2009.

Bruce R. Williams
Mayor

Attest:

Jessie Carpenter, CMC
City Clerk