



## Haw River Assembly's "Plastic-Free" Pledge

The service industry is a major contributor to the plastic pollution that ends up in our rivers and local waters. While this has an immediate effect on local wildlife, it also has a long-term effect on people too. These single-use plastics break down even further, into microplastics, which later make their way into the food we eat and into our drinking water.

By signing this pledge, you and your establishment have committed to taking a giant step closer to being a sustainable business, protecting your watershed and becoming leaders in your community.

[Sign the Plastic Free Pledge Here](#)

### Why Sign This Pledge?

Haw River Assembly is beginning to do microplastics monitoring throughout the Haw River basin. So far, microplastics have been present in 100% of samples collected. Microplastics impact wildlife cumulatively; smaller organisms are attracted to the bright colors as a potential source of food, and the particles work their way up the food chain, threatening eagles, otters, and even humans through freshwater and saltwater shellfish and seafood. Microplastics have also been found in the water we drink and the air we breathe.

By taking this step to voluntarily phase out single use plastics from your business, we can show our local and state legislators that the challenge to protect ourselves and our environment from microplastic pollution is one worth fighting, and it is not a barrier to economic growth.

## How Will this Benefit My Business?

- Participating businesses will receive a “Plastic Free” Window Decal to notify customers about your commitment to the pledge
- Recognition in our spring print newsletter (~900 individuals)
- Recognition in our digital newsletter (~1,300 recipients)
- Social media recognition (~1,800 followers)



## Getting Rid of Plastics in Your Establishment

Instead of...	You're Pledging to Use...
Relying on single-use items	Encourage incentives for reusables first, responsible single-use second
Plastic single-use	Compostable cups, lids, straws, cutlery, to-go containers, etc. ( <a href="http://vegwareus.com">vegwareus.com</a> )
Plastic single-use	Reusable straws (metal or silicone), cups, cutlery, to-go containers, etc. ( <a href="http://shellcreeksellers.com">shellcreeksellers.com</a> )

Linked in blue are just SUGGESTED companies, but your business may want to see if their current suppliers offer these alternatives as well

## Wanting to do More?

Thanks to the team at Joe Van Gogh for these sustainability business practices that go above and beyond

- Using waste separation and proper signage - make everything you carry go into the same bin (compost or recycling)
  - Signs Specific to your business ([thesplintergroup.net](http://thesplintergroup.net))
- Train staff to engage customers
- Know your local recycling guidelines and communicate them with your team
- Encourage incentives for reusables first, responsible single-use second
- Recycled paper towels, toilet paper, etc. ([unifirst.com](http://unifirst.com))
- Compostable cellophane ([clearbags.com](http://clearbags.com))
- Energy efficient LEDs ([eaglesolarandlight.com](http://eaglesolarandlight.com))
- Know your products and buy with intentionality

## Some Questions Customers Might Ask

Q: Why would you do this (change products)?

A: The food and beverage industry is a massive contributor to single-use waste, and we do not want to compound the problem. This is just one facet of what we are doing to be more sustainable, send less waste to the landfill, and give back to the community.

Q: How does composting give back to the community?

A: When we send compostable products to our composting partner - "Compost Now" - it is turned into a rich soil component that is distributed to local farms and gardens.

Q: Why not just recycle?

A: We recycle too! We do our best to make sure our single use products are either compostable or recyclable. But recycling rules are constantly changing and not the same everywhere, so we use a variation of both that still fits our customers needs.