

# JULY SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGE

Reducing the Top 5 Single-Use Plastics

WEEK 3



## REUSABLE BAGS

Single-use plastic bags are convenient and cheap. However, for something we use for such a short time (12 minutes on average), they are a real nuisance in the environment and less than 10% get recycled. People and companies are working on solutions though. Check out Beyond the Bag to see what some companies are doing, and commit to doing your part!

- **BAGS YOU LOVE** – Find and use bags you love (or make your own). Like Marie Kondo encourages, use things that make you happy. If you like your bags, you're more likely to use them!
- **WASH REGULARLY** – During this pandemic, wash your bags after each use. If looking to purchase bags, consider how easy they are to wash.

## STRAWS & STIR STICKS

The number of single-use straws used each day is quite astounding (500,000 per day). Like plastic cutlery, they are not recyclable.

- **ASK FOR CHANGE** – It goes without saying that one way you could reduce your impact is to not use anything at all. This means asking for no straw at restaurants. Go one step further and leave this card with your bill or ask to talk to management about only serving straws on request. It could even result in cost savings for the restaurant.
- **USE ALTERNATIVES**– There are many options for alternatives to plastic single-use straws such as stainless steel and bamboo. If you get to-go beverages often, keep straws in many places so you'll have one with you. For stir sticks, use reusable options or use disposable wooden sticks (sourced responsibly like FSC certified).
- **RESOURCES** – Check out One Last Straw or Plastic Pollution Coalition for videos, information, and more.

## REUSABLE BOTTLES

While plastic bottles are recyclable, less than a third get recycled in the US. Using a reusable bottle is probably the tip accepted most readily and done by a large portion of people, but see below for ways to go beyond.

- **THE NEXT STEP** – If you already use a reusable bottle, try going a little further. This may be not buying a bottled beverage you normally would have (saving money and a bottle). Another next step could be trying to influence the behavior of others by setting an example or even talking to people about why it's important to reduce single-use bottles. Be creative!
- **IDEAS ON CAMPUS** – Even though we are not on campus as much, look for ways to reduce HSC's water bottle consumption. Talk to meeting organizers and encourage them to utilize our filling stations rather than offering bottles.