



**For Immediate Release**

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## **NJCCC Urges New Jerseyans to “Skip the Straw” to Help Fight Plastic Pollution**

**TRENTON – September 20, 2021** – Did you know that a plastic straw only takes one minute to make, it is used an average of 10 minutes and then takes more than 100 years to decompose?

These facts are among the reasons why the New Jersey Clean Communities Council (NJCCC) is asking all residents to “Skip the Straw.”

Beginning on November 4, single-use plastic straws will only be provided upon request at all restaurants, convenience stores and fast food businesses throughout the state, as per state law. Packages of straws and pre-packaged items, such as juice boxes, may still be sold in stores.

“By skipping the straw, or bringing your own, it helps New Jersey reduce litter and it protects our valuable marine life and other wildlife,” explained NJCCC Executive Director JoAnn Gemenden. “Each year, an estimated 1 million birds, marine mammals and sea turtles die from plastics. We are asking all New Jerseyans to do their part. Please, **“Skip the Straw.”**”

The Skip the Straw campaign follows state legislation that reports approximately eight million tons of plastics end up in the oceans annually. Without action, scientists estimate that by 2050 the mass of plastic pollution in the ocean will exceed the mass of fish. One study found plastics in the gut of every sea turtle examined.

“Plastics are destroying our planet and removing straws from commerce would help to reduce the overwhelming quantity of plastics impacting our health and the health of our planet, so please do your part and skip the straw,” said Sen. Bob Smith (D-Middlesex, Somerset), chair of the Senate Environment and Energy Committee.

“Taking steps to protect our environment is how New Jersey residents can ensure a better future for ourselves and subsequent generations,” added Assemblyman John McKeon (D-Essex, Morris), a member of the Assembly Environment and Solid Waste Committee.

“We each have a responsibility to help reduce waste and pollution in our state,” the assemblyman said. “Cutting down on single-use plastics and engaging in more sustainable practices is one way we can help accomplish that goal. Moving forward, I encourage my fellow New Jerseyans to ‘skip the straw’ whenever possible.”

Not only is the NJCCC embracing the Skip the Straw campaign, it has launched a separate educational program to encourage residents to bring their own bags when they shop at the store. Beginning May 4 of next year, stores will no longer be providing paper and plastic bags to customers.

NJCCC is spreading the work through its Bag Up NJ campaign. Learn more at [BagUpNJ.com](http://BagUpNJ.com).  
Learn more about NJCCC's anti-littering campaign statewide at [njclean.org](http://njclean.org).

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