AGN. NO._____

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS SHEILA KUEHL AND JANICE HAHN

October 9, 2018

Reducing the Use of Plastic Straws

Los Angeles County generates a significant amount of waste from single-use plastic food service ware. Often, these products, which include clamshell containers, cups, bowls, plates, utensils, straws, and plastic sip stirrers (small, thin straws commonly used for cocktails and hot beverages) end up in landfills or waterways. In 2017, the most common trash found on beaches across California during the annual Coastal Cleanup Day was discarded plastic pieces.

Research studies, like one by UC Davis, show that around ¼ of all fish sampled in Half Moon Bay contain traces of plastic. Videos of plastic straws wedged in sea turtles' noses and in the stomachs of seabirds have gone viral on social media platforms. As the general public receives more information on the dangers of plastic debris to human health and the environment, more people have called for action.

Over one hundred municipalities in California including Santa Monica, Calabasas, Culver City, Hermosa Beach, Malibu, Manhattan Beach, Pasadena, South Pasadena, and West Hollywood have adopted ordinances that address the use of various single-

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use plastic products for food. Cities such as Malibu and Santa Monica have banned the use of plastic straws as sustainable alternatives become increasingly available and cost-effective. Additionally, Governor Brown recently signed AB 1884, a bill introduced by Assemblyman Ian Calderon that will prohibit full service restaurants statewide from providing single-use plastic straws unless requested by a customer beginning January 1, 2019.

In response to these changes, consumers are modifying their habits, and many state and local policies are further adapting to environmental realities. The 2016 statewide ban on plastic bags has significantly reduced the volume of discarded bags that end up on beaches – by over 60% when compared to pre-ban Coastal Cleanup events. This change in the law occurred with little economic impact on businesses and consumers. In the private sector, some companies like Starbucks and Disney have already begun to address environmental issues with single-use plastic by phasing out plastic straws and plastic sip stirrers, further shifting away from traditional use of these materials.

When plastic straws and plastic sip stirrers are automatically provided to customers without asking whether they want the product, they often go unused and end up being thrown away. Like other single-use food service ware products, many of these plastic straws and plastic sip stirrers find their way to landfills and our waterways. Despite the fact that this waste occurs, Americans still use 500 million straws each day.

The health of the water in Los Angeles County is a critical part of the region's environmental sustainability, self-reliance, and economic vitality. Uncontrolled waste-stream pollution continues to negatively impact our waterways, adjacent lakes, and the Pacific Ocean. As part of our efforts to improve the quality of life of our residents and

simultaneously comply with the provisions of the Federal Clean Water Act, the County has spent millions of dollars retrofitting catch basins, collecting trash, sweeping streets, and conducting anti-litter public outreach.

In light of the significant waste generated by plastic straws and plastic sip stirrers, it is appropriate to require that business establishments serving food and/or beverages, not just full service restaurants, ask customers if they would like to use plastic straws and plastic sip stirrers first, rather than automatically providing them. This effort would help protect the environment, our waterways, and wildlife.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors (Board) direct the Department of Public Works in coordination with the Chief Sustainability Officer, the Department of Public Health, the Department of Consumer and Business Affairs, and County Counsel to draft an ordinance requiring businesses serving food and/or beverages in the unincorporated portions of Los Angeles County to ask a customer if they would like a plastic straw or plastic sip stirrer before providing them. Such ordinance shall be returned to the Board within seven weeks for consideration, and will become effective January 3, 2019.

S: VV/Reducing the Use of Plastic Straws