



NEWS

SPORTS

THE SPOT 518

TOWNS

OPINION

PARENT/SENIOR

CLASSIFIED

SUBS

+ FOLLOW



Grocers raise concerns over Styrofoam ban

Dec 11, 2013 John Purcell News 0



Leading supermarket chains voiced qualms over the Albany County Legislature's recently adopted Food Service Waste Reduction Act, but not over the most contentious proposal banning Styrofoam containers. Their concerns rested mainly on the requirement of compostable or biodegradable packaging.

Albany County Executive Dan McCoy held a public hearing Monday, Dec. 2, on the proposed local law that would ban polystyrene foam, commonly known as Styrofoam, in food containers used at chain food establishments. About 50 people spoke up during the hearing, which lasted around two and a half hours. Most of those comments were in favor of the law, with many voicing concern about the foam's impact on the landfill and potential health issues.

Those against the law, which included industry representatives and businesses, said it could have grave economic consequences that could mean an end to their livelihoods. They also refuted any health concerns.

Several familiar voices in the debate returned, but grocery store representatives also raised new concerns about the law's possible effect on prepared and packaged foods.

George Parmenter, sustainability manager for Hannaford Supermarkets, said nearly all prepackaged food is in a recyclable container at the store. Parmenter was concerned such packaging would have to be replaced with non-recyclable packing under the law.

Click Here!

REASSURANCE

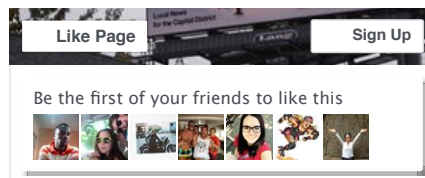


Delmar Pediatrics PLLC
Children • Adolescents • Reassurance • Education

Like Spotlight on Facebook



Spotlight Newspapers
2,974 likes



Your Email

Subscribe

"If recyclable packages are prohibited for items in-store, we will have to overcome that by finding replacements for all these packages," Parmenter said. "This would be a costly and complex process. ... We are not even sure that we could replace everything that we have."

The law requires all chain food service establishments using disposable food service ware to use a "suitable, alternative product" that is compostable or biodegradable. There is no mention of recyclability.

Shannon DeFreese, spokeswoman for ShopRite, also said the bill would increase costs and reduce job opportunities.

"This potential bill could increase the cost by three times," DeFreese said. "All of this cost has to be absorbed by our company because we wouldn't want to raise prices in such a competitive market."

David Golub, senior vice president of administration for Price Chopper Supermarkets, said he hoped the law could be revised to balance the interests of consumers, county officials, businesses and the environment.

"We need to all sit down at the table and really craft some legislation that allows everybody to accomplish this," Golub said.

Nick Vaughn, spokesman for the Albany-Colonie Regional Chamber of Commerce, urged McCoy to veto the law and instead focus on a recycling initiative to "create a level playing field" for all businesses.

"The idea of piecemeal legislation only further burdens local businesses and is not sustainable," Vaughn said.

Most chain food establishments are also locally owned, Vaughn said. The law would apply to businesses with more than 15 locations nationally.

County Legislator Christopher Higgins, D-Albany, said he was surprised to see grocery store representatives speaking out against the proposed law because he claimed it would not apply to such businesses.

"I was very curious why they were here," Higgins said. "We've worked with the Food Industry Alliance on this; they supported this local law, and ShopRite and other grocery stores (are) exempt from it under (state law)."

Jessica Semon, of Albany, said companies must transition to more sustainability and environmentally friendly practices.

"The public shouldn't have to take all the burden on for this," Semon said. "Companies need to be responsible for public health and the environment, just as everyone else does. We do have packaging that was available before."

Anna Brewer, a 17-year-old from Cohoes, argued jobs would be created as businesses shift to alternative packaging. She also noted small businesses would not be affected by the law.

"We are going to be using more of the alternative. Someone is going to need to make it, so we are going to need jobs for that," Brewer said.

Andy Arthur, of Delmar, urged McCoy to approve the law and revisit it if changes are needed.

"It may not be a perfect law, but it's a good law," Arthur said. "If there's some problems with the law we have 180 days to do a chapter amendment, but you should sign the law as a matter of principal right now."

McCoy did not indicate whether he would sign off or veto the law, but said county attorneys would review the law and if it could be enforced. He has 30 days to make a decision upon receiving the bill from the legislature.

"I am all for the environment and protecting, especially my three children, but I have to look at it from a legal aspect," McCoy said. "It was nice to hear back from the residents of Albany County and really talk about what is important to them. This seems like a very important issue and something for the future of our environment here."

Share this:



« Sports poll: What Suburban Council girls basketball team will have the best record in the league?

Card skimmer sentenced »

LITTLE FALLS LUMBER

Now Open in Schenectady
Visit Our Kitchen Showroom
We are the "Big-Box Store" Alternative
Click for More Info

Follow Spotlight Staff on Twitter

Spotlight staff

A Twitter list by [@spotnewsfeed](#)

The Spotlight news team brings you the best and latest local coverage.




Life in a yellow submarine [@thebeatles](#)
[#MemorialDay2016](#) [#bethlehemny](#) [#delmarny](#)
[#spotlightliving](#)





30 May




Latest | **Popular** | **Tag**

**Elsmere Community Day this Saturday, June 4**
Jun 02, 2016 0

**McCoy announces plans to bolster and revamp Public Defender's Office**
Jun 02, 2016 0

**A walk in the woods: The Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy offers several preserves for people to hike and enjoy nature**
Jun 02, 2016 0

**Veteran Next Door: What happened after the boys came home**
Jun 02, 2016 0