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CITY CLERK
CITY OF PASADENA

July 12, 2021
Pasadena City Council
100 North Garfield Ave.
Pasadena, CA 91101

RE: Disposable Accessory Foodware Item Ordinance

Dear Mayor Gordo and Honorable Councilmembers,

On behalf of our members and supporters in Pasadena, Oceana writes in support of strengthening the Disposable Accessory Foodware Item Ordinance to reduce unnecessary single-use plastic from takeout and delivery food service. As the largest international advocacy organization dedicated solely to ocean conservation, Oceana works to advance science-based policies at the national, state and local level that will restore the ocean's abundance and biodiversity.

Single-use plastics like accessory foodware items, including utensils, straws and condiment packets, are profoundly flawed by design. These products are made of a material created to last forever, but they are designed to be used for only a few moments before polluting the earth for years to come. Our oceans face a massive and growing threat from plastic pollution. An estimated 33 billion pounds of plastic enter the marine environment every year. If trends continue the way they are expected, the annual flow of plastic into our oceans will nearly triple by 2040. Communities shoulder an enormous financial burden for plastic waste's cleanup and disposal costs. Local jurisdictions in California spend \$420 million annually in efforts to clean up and prevent plastic and other waste from entering the ocean and waterways.

The Disposable Accessory Foodware Item Ordinance would require restaurants and other food service providers to supply disposable foodware accessories only upon the request of the customer. This ordinance is a good step toward reducing the harmful environmental, health and economic impacts of unnecessary single-use plastics. We hope that the Council will ensure its efficacy by making the following change. We urge you to remove this sentence in the ordinance: "This provision does not prohibit a restaurant or other Food Service Provider from asking a Customer if they would like Disposable Accessory Foodware Items with their order or providing self-service dispensers."

In order to have the greatest impact, Oceana strongly supports ensuring accessory foodware ordinances are modeled for customer opt-in. An opt-in policy makes the exclusion of single-use accessory foodware items the default, and these items are not offered to customers either verbally or through self-service dispensers before they are requested by the customer. This is the model



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that was passed by the Los Angeles City Council in April. As it currently is written, Pasadena's ordinance is an opt-out model, in which restaurants and businesses can preemptively offer disposable foodware to customers. The opt-out model is less likely to reach the ordinance's goal of reducing single-use plastics by skipping unnecessary accessory items. We recommend that the Council amend the ordinance to be an opt-in model.

We respectfully urge you to remove language in the ordinance that allows restaurants and other food service providers to ask a customer if they would like disposable accessory foodware items as well as that which allows for self-service dispensers.

The time to take action on the plastics crisis is now. Policies like the Disposable Accessory Foodware Item Ordinance are an important step in the right direction. Oceana again commends the Council for taking up this bill and urges you to bring it to its full potential by making this change.

Sincerely,

Angelica Torres
Oceana Plastics Campaign Fellow