

R-1 Discontinuing single-use plastic products, single-use foam products, and single-use water bottles at diocesan churches and facilities

Resolved, that this 225th Annual Convention, acting consistently with General Convention Resolution 2009-A-045, call upon all churches, schools, conference centers and offices of the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia to discontinue the use of disposable, single-use plastic products and foam products including but not limited to: plates, cutlery, cups, straws, food wraps, and bags; and be it further

Resolved, that this 225th Annual Convention call upon all churches, schools, conference centers and offices of the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia to transition to reusable, compostable, and washable alternatives and away from single-use plastic products, single-use foam products, and single-use water bottles unless health and safety considerations require otherwise.

Background:

General Convention Resolution 2009-A-045 provides that:

Resolved, That the 76th General Convention ask the Church to restrict the use of bottled water at General Convention and at other Church-sponsored activities where safe, because of the extreme negative environmental impact that attends its production; and be it further

Resolved, That every baptized Christian be encouraged to practice simple energy and water conservation techniques so that, by working together, we may restore the beauty of God's creation and ensure that this resource may again be available to all God's children in abundance.

Rationale:

Since the 1950s, 8.3 billion tons of plastic has been produced worldwide.¹ Plastic is a non-biodegradable product. Most of the plastic ever produced in the history of the world still exists in some form. 91% of it is never recycled and ends up in landfills or the open environment. Roughly half of the world's plastic production is dedicated to single-use products such as packaging, food containers and water bottles.

The following is a brief list of statistics about plastic and styrofoam waste:

500 billion disposable cups are consumed every year. Americans alone throw away 25 billion styrofoam coffee cups every year. Styrofoam cannot be completely recycled. Most of the Styrofoam disposed of today will still be present in landfills 500 years from now.²

32% of the 78 million tons of plastic packaging produced annually is not recycled or sent to landfills. It is left unmanaged and flows into the world's oceans through streams and rivers.³

90% of the trash in the world's oceans is plastic, roughly 46,000 pieces per square mile.⁴

Improper waste management is a global crisis. If plastic pollution continues at its current rate, it is predicted that plastic will outweigh all fish in the oceans by 2050.⁵ The Episcopal Church identified Care of Creation as an integral part of the Jesus Movement in Resolution A013 at the 79th General Convention in 2018. In passing this resolution, the Diocese of Virginia has an opportunity to play a leadership role in the Episcopal Church's mission of environmental stewardship and provide an example practicable waste reduction.

Submitted by Mr. Jack Schick, on behalf of the Creation Care Task Force



References

¹www.globalcitizen.org

²⁻³www.earthday.org

⁴www.theworldcounts.com

⁵www.biologicaldiversity.org