

TOWN OF WELLESLEY



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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Wellesley's Skip the Stuff Bylaw is Now in Effect**

**January 7, 2026 (Wellesley, MA)** – There's a new message to diners in Wellesley – if you need single-use service ware or single-serving packaged condiments with your order, please ask! As of January 1, 2026, all Wellesley food service establishments are providing single-use articles like plastic utensils, napkins, stirrers, and condiment packages ONLY by customer request or at a self-service counter. This change reflects a new Town of Wellesley bylaw known as [Skip the Stuff](#) which will reduce waste created by disposable items while saving money for restaurants.

Annual Town Meeting approved *Skip the Stuff* in April 2025. In doing so, Wellesley joined a growing number of cities and towns in Massachusetts and across the country requiring food establishments to provide single-use articles only upon customer request and to prohibit distribution of bundled single-use items (e.g. a fork, knife, spoon, and napkin in a plastic wrapper). Americans use over 560 billion disposable food service items every year, resulting in at least 4.9 million tons of waste, much of which cannot be recycled. Often restaurants provide these accessories unnecessarily, increasing the chances that single-use articles will contribute to litter, polluted waterways, and crowded landfills. The greenhouse gas emissions created from the production, transport, and disposal of these items also contribute to climate change.

*Skip the Stuff* will help 1) Reduce waste and greenhouse gas emissions associated with single-use articles; 2) Change customer habits; and 3) Reduce unnecessary costs to food service establishments. Many Wellesley food service establishments already require customers to request single-use articles when ordering online. The Wellesley Board of Health and Health Department staff will enforce the new bylaw.

### **Climate Action Impact**

*Skip the Stuff* is a collaborative effort between the Health Department, Climate Action Committee, and the Wellesley Recycling and Disposal Facility (RDF). The bylaw supports the Town's [Climate Action Plan \(CAP\)](#) by helping the Town achieve greenhouse gas emissions goals and meet a variety of sustainability objectives such as reducing costly landfill-bound waste at the RDF.

## **Responsible Residents**

In the past few months, all Wellesley food service establishments were notified of the new bylaw and received packets with information for business owners and their staff. These materials include signs, window clings, and tent cards explaining *Skip the Stuff* for patrons. All materials contain a QR code linking to the Town's [\*Skip the Stuff\* webpage](#) with comprehensive details. Diners can help by educating themselves about the bylaw and remembering to request single-use articles when ordering in person, on the phone, or online.

Learn more about *Skip the Stuff* and explore other options to help reduce plastic use by [visiting the Wellesley Health Department webpages.](#)

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