

Nicole Pentney
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November 21, 2019

Mayor and Members of Council
Town of Fort Frances
320 Portage Avenue
Fort Frances, ON P9A 3P9

Mayor and Members of Council:

Re: Proposed Single Use Products By-Law

I am writing this letter to express my concern regarding the proposed Single Use Products By-law, which is seeking to include single use plastic straws. The ban of plastic straws has become a growing trend, and is creating barriers for those living with disabilities.

Upon review of the proposed Single Use Products By-Law, it is clear it aims to create positive change. Change is necessary, and I feel many would agree. With that being said, the proposed by-law unfortunately fails to accept that single use straws are an accessibility item. Specifically, Part 2.3 of the proposed by-law states: No business shall sell or provide Single Use Food Packaging to a Consumer for the purpose of transporting, containing or **facilitating the consumption of prepared food or beverages** received by the Consumer from the Business.

Single use plastic straws are an accessibility item, and current plastic straw alternatives simply do not create an effective solution. Please see the chart below to see the potential risks of current straw alternatives:

	CHOKING HAZARD	INJURY RISK	NOT POSITIONABLE	COSTLY FOR CONSUMERS	NOT HIGH- TEMP SAFE	HIGH MAINTENANCE
Acrylic		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bamboo		✓	✓	✓		✓
Glass		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Metal		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Paper	✓		✓		✓	
Pasta	✓		✓		✓	
Silicone		✓	✓	✓		✓
Single -use						

Reusable straws can easily be forgotten at home. If an individual fails to bring a reusable straw (if they are able to afford one) and there are no appropriate alternatives available, they will potentially not be able to take their medications, or consume a beverage. Reusable straws also require rinsing between uses, as well as proper, thorough cleaning at home, which limits independence, as well as creates a potential health concern if cleaning is not completed correctly.

Communities and centers which have banned single use straws are coming to terms with how this discriminates the disabled community. The Canadian Human Rights Act prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities. The Equality Rights Section of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees people with disabilities equal benefits. If we include single use straws in the by-law, even in a subsection, the accessibility to this important item will simply diminish.

We can take steps towards saving the environment and still be inclusive toward the disabled community. Perhaps we can follow other communities, and being programs that promote restaurants to provide plastic straws upon request only.

In closing, I hope this letter has raised awareness to how the trending straw ban creates discrimination and accessibility barriers for the disabled community. It is my hope that the proposed by-law can be amended before approval to extract the restriction of plastic straws within our community.

Thank you for your time and consideration regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

Nicole Pentney

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nicole Pentney". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.