

## **Consumers in WA want to “Bring Your Own Container”**

**Sample talking points** (use 1 or 2 of these points and add your own personal story):

- When consumers bring their own container, it will **save money for businesses** AND there will be fewer items to have to recycle (also saving money).
- Fewer single-use, disposable “to go” containers will help **reduce plastic pollution** littered in the environment, **keep more items out of the landfill**, and reduce plastic **contamination of the compost stream**. All of these benefits will also **reduce community costs**.
- Washington State places highest priority on waste prevention. Bring your own container is **true waste prevention**.
- Bringing your own container reduces the potential for **toxic chemical transfer to food**. Plastic containers have additives that can migrate to food (leaching is caused by heat exchange or from foods that are high in fat).
- Fewer single-use food containers means reduction of the impacts of extraction, production, transportation and disposal of plastic, all of which contribute to **greenhouse gas emissions**.

**Background:** Federal Drug Administration (FDA) publishes Food Safety guidelines on which states base their health codes. The FDA and states periodically update their food codes. Currently, FDA allows consumers to bring their own **beverage** containers for refilling, as well as specific circumstances when you can bring your own container to be filled with certain kinds of foods. Join Zero Waste Washington and others to support the update of the WA state food safety code to include **a broader definition of when consumers are allowed to bring your own container for refilling**. We support the draft version that is being reviewed this summer that allows consumers to: 1) Bring your own container to fill yourself with *not-ready-to-eat* foods like pasta and beans or packaged foods (like wrapped candies) and 2) Bring your own container that food establishment employees can fill for you with *ready-to-eat* food such as teriyaki or salad. **We think it should also allow consumers to bring their own container for all beverages**, including those that contain milk, for example.

**Submit your Comments:** You can submit your comment in person at one of the July public meetings OR you can submit them by email to: [food.safety@doh.wa.gov](mailto:food.safety@doh.wa.gov). *Here is a sample email, which you can personalize:*

Dear Ms. Shelton,

I am writing to support the changes in the WA food code, *WAC 246-215-03348 Refilling Returnables*, that allows consumers to bring their own containers for buying and refilling food and beverages. This will benefit businesses, consumers, municipalities, and the environment:

- Businesses will save money by purchasing fewer single-use to-go foodware items.
- Consumers will have less waste at home and be exposed to fewer hazardous chemicals from plastic.
- Municipalities will save money in disposal costs.
- The environment will have less waste blowing into our waterways.

Please consider going further and allow consumers to bring your own container for any and all beverages. Thank you for listening to consumers and helping to reduce waste.

Sincerely,

Your name and address (they need to know you live in WA)