



## HTO GETS CITY STYROFOAM BAN TIGHTENED!



Hillary Hauser asks Council to limit exemption clause on Styrofoam ban (photo by Alison Thompson)

**IT WAS A GREAT DAY IN CITY COUNCIL ON TUESDAY.** The Council voted to restrict plastic straws - after a heart-warming plea from beautiful children as well as heartfelt requests from physically challenged members of the community who told the Council they needed straws to have access to food/drink like everyone else...(the plastic straw regulation includes provisions for physically challenged people to have access to straws). HTO told Council that while we really wanted a total ban, we support the “ask-only” regulation because such regulation is said to reduce straw use by **80% or even 90%**. We asked that straw-use numbers be checked a year after the Ordinance goes into effect on January 1, 2019.

But when it came to Styrofoam, the Council voted an outright ban, and this **ban includes important language only Heal the Ocean insisted on.**

As written, the proposed Ordinance on Styrofoam contained an exemption clause that would have given food retailers the ability to plead “hardship” every year. If they could prove Styrofoam was better for their product (i.e. Smoothies), or that changing to a more environmentally-friendly product would cause economic hardship, they could carry on with Styrofoam.

**HEAL THE OCEAN challenged this language.** We asked the City Council to change the wording to ONE YEAR and no more. As a result of our request City Council began to parse the word “hardship,” and in the end, City Council voted 7-0 to change the Ordinance to read that after one year, “hardship” cases **will not be renewed**. This means the Styrofoam ban is more like **a real ban** - and we salute the City Council for agreeing with us. The Styrofoam ban also goes into effect January 1, 2019.

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