**WHAT IS “Students for ZERO WASTE WEEK”?**

**STUDENTS FOR ZERO WASTE WEEK** is a student-led campaign that raises awareness of how **single use plastics** and other types of waste that we produce on land impact the health of our local watersheds, marine sanctuaries and the ocean.

From **March 16 - April 24th, 2020**, students are participating in the **ZERO WASTE WEEK** challenge and working to reduce waste on school campuses, at home and out in the communities by remembering to:

- Replace single use plastic items (such as drink bottles, sandwich baggies, snack bags, spork paks, etc.) with reusable alternatives
- Use cloth napkins instead of paper
- Step up recycling and composting efforts
- Replace single use condiment packets with bulk dispensers
- Replace plastic straws with paper straws or consider not using straws
- Power down computers and other electronic devices when not in use
- Refuse products containing microbeads

**WHAT IS A TABLE TENT?**

Table tents are a great way to remind the public about how we all need to **reduce our waste on land and be better stewards of our watersheds and ocean.** Table tents can be placed on tables and counter tops in places such as:
- restaurants,
- cafes,
- libraries,
- school offices, staff lunch/meeting rooms, cafeterias

**WHAT IS THE PROBLEM WITH PLASTIC STRAWS?**

**PLASTIC STRAWS** do **not biodegrade.**

Plastic straws photo-degrade. They break down into smaller and smaller pieces that **don't go “away”**. These tiny plastic pieces pollute our waters and harm marine life.

In the U.S. alone, we use and discard **500 MILLION PLASTIC STRAWS A DAY!** That’s enough straws to fill 127 school buses every day! (*http://ecocycle.org/bestrawfree/faqs*)

Plastic straws are consistently one of the **TOP 10** items on the International Coastal Cleanup list.

**WHAT YOU CAN DO?** We’re asking people to reduce their use of plastic straws. Businesses can also help reduce the use of plastic straws by adopting the practice of **“OFFER FIRST”** and provide plastic straws to customers **only upon request.** Many restaurants already do this with glasses of water.

If you have to use a straw, please consider using **PAPER STRAWS** or **REUSABLE STRAWS**.

With each person taking **simple actions**, **TOGETHER** we can make a difference!

**WILL REDUCING PLASTIC STRAWS REALLY MAKE A DIFFERENCE?** We understand that saying “no” to plastic straws and other single use items is a small step to take towards reducing waste on our planet. We also understand that these small steps are helping us to look at our behavior and use of single-use plastic items, like straws. Once we become more aware of our behavior, bigger changes become more possible!

For more information about **Students for Zero Waste Week**, please contact jezella.peraza@noaa.gov