



Washington State Bans PFAS in Four Types of Food Packaging

The State of Washington has announced that per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in four types of food packaging will be banned beginning February 2023.

Background: A 2018 amendment to Washington's Toxics in Packaging Law included a ban on PFAS in food packaging that was to become effective in January 2022, if less toxic chemicals and nonchemical alternatives were identified by January 2020, via an Alternatives Assessment. But, if less toxic chemicals and nonchemical alternatives were not identified by January 2020, then the ban would take effect two years after safer alternative products are identified and reported to the state.

Definitions per the law (RCW 70A.222.010):

Food packaging: "a package or packaging component that is intended for direct food contact and are comprised, in substantial part, of paper, paperboard, or other materials originally derived from plant fibers."

PFAS: having at least one fully fluorinated carbon atom.

Summary of Alternative Assessment Report:

Washington's Department of Ecology (DoE) recently released its first Alternatives Assessment Report for PFAS in food packaging. The DoE evaluated ten types of food packaging to determine if safer alternatives to PFAS exist, taking into consideration chemical hazards, exposure, performance, cost, and availability of alternative materials. The DoE determined that PFAS alternatives are available for the following four types of packaging:

Type of Packaging:	Alternative:
Wraps and Liners	Wax-coated options
Plates	Clay-coated and reusable options
Food boats	Clay-coated and reusable options
Pizza boxes	Uncoated options

However, the assessment determined that there was not enough information available to find safer alternatives for PFAS in the other six products, as follows:

- Bags and sleeves
- Bowls
- Trays
- French fry cartons
- Clamshells
- Interlocking folded containers

The DoE will continue the Alternative Assessment for the above six types of food packaging, and possibly additional packaging.

Additional Information:

- <https://ecology.wa.gov/Blog/Posts/February-2021/Making-food-packaging-safer-with-alternatives-to-t>
- https://www.ezview.wa.gov/site/alias_1962/37610/pfas_in_food_packaging_alternatives_assessment.aspx

Additional Note: Maine and New York states have passed similar restrictions on PFAS in food packaging. Several other states have or are likely to introduce laws to eliminate PFAS in food contact materials in 2021 as well.

How Does this Impact You? Contact Us to Discuss

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