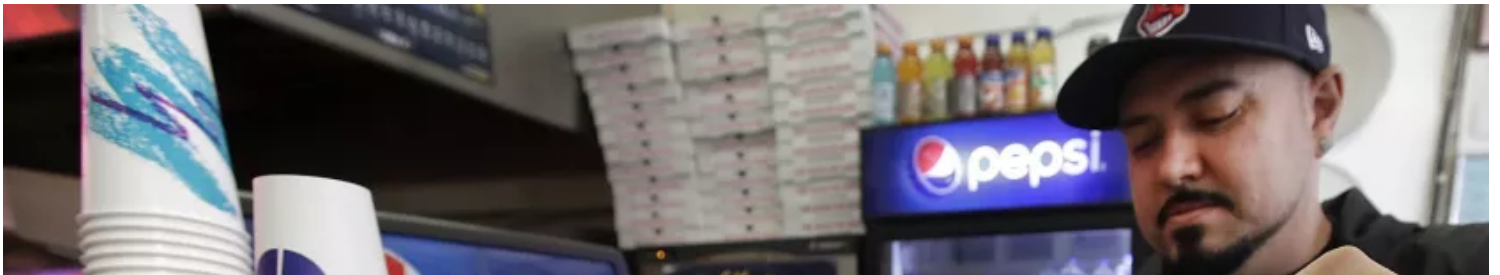


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Berkeley approves 25-cent fee on disposable cups at restaurants



Los Angeles Times

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Berkeley's fee on disposable cups is part of an effort to eliminate restaurant waste. (Ben Margot / Associated Press)

BY ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Reporting from San Francisco — Patrons of restaurants and coffee shops in Berkeley who don't bring a reusable cup for their beverage will have to pay a 25-cent fee for a disposable cup as part of an ordinance approved by city officials to reduce restaurant waste.

Berkeley's City Council voted unanimously Tuesday to approve the fee on single-use cups that will take effect next January.

"The goal is to transition Berkeley from throwaway to reusable food ware, to incentivize people to bring their own cup," said Councilwoman Sophie Hahn, who co-wrote the ordinance with Mayor Jesse Arreguin.

The ordinance, called Disposable-Free Dining, also requires restaurants to provide takeout containers by mid-2020 that are compostable and to provide only reusable plates and utensils for those eating in. It also says other disposable items, such as lids and stirrers, can be offered only when requested.

Restaurants would keep all proceeds from the disposable cup fee, and it would be up to them to decide what to do with the extra money. The funds, for example, could be used to replace plastic cutlery for more environmentally friendly silverware, Hahn said.

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The change comes as restaurants adjust to an increase in the minimum wage to \$15 per hour as of October, Baker said.

“Everyone is excited about doing something about the environment — and then the food price goes up, but the student doesn’t make the connection and stops eating out and business goes down. That’s a concern,” he said.

Baker said he hopes the city educates the public about what the 25-cent fee would mean for the environment. “For this to be successful, people need to understand this will impact their pocketbook,” he said.

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