

CHARLES RIVER

REGIONAL CHAMBER

March 10th, 2025

Dear Needham Select Board Members,

Since the Select Board last considered the black plastic ban petition, the chamber has conducted outreach to our membership to gather feedback on supply chain and cost concerns associated with black plastic alternatives.

We received responses primarily from Newton restaurants, where a black plastic ban has been in place since last year. These establishments largely reported that they have not encountered problems sourcing clear or white plastic alternatives and that the costs associated with these containers have remained comparable. However, they did raise concerns that ongoing regulatory bans create uncertainty in an already challenging business environment. Small businesses now face immigration and tariff concerns along with ongoing operational challenges; added regulations only exacerbate these difficulties.

Meanwhile, the town's survey shows some Needham restaurants foresee financial impacts from a black plastic ban. We urge the Board to carefully consider those concerns and the effect of going back to our business year after year with new regulations. Running a small business is challenging at any time, and continuous regulatory changes have tangible impacts. But it is especially challenging now.

Additionally, we would like to highlight that Newton's ordinance exempts black plastic containers under 4 ounces. These containers are too small to be processed by recycling machinery. Regardless of their color—black, white, or clear— they ultimately end up in a landfill. If the board decides to sponsor a ban on the sale or distribution of black plastic, we recommend an exemption for any container 4 ounces or smaller.

Thank you for your consideration.

Max Woolf,

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