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**DRAFT**

## Hampton Roads Restaurants Invited to Skip Serving Straws for Straw-free September Days

(Hampton Roads, Va., Sept. X, 2019) – April's Straw-free Earth Day event with local restaurants was so much fun, [askHRgreen.org](http://askHRgreen.org) and [Keep it Beachy Clean](http://KeepItBeachyClean.org) are doing it again—and not just for one day. Beginning September 21 through the end of the month, participating dining spots will skip serving straws with drinks as part of **Straw-free September Days**, bringing awareness to the environmental effects of single-use plastics.

The event launch coincides with International Coastal Cleanup Day, a global sweep of the world's beaches and waterways held annually in September. According to data collected from the Ocean Conservancy, single-use plastic straws and stirrers have consistently ranked in the top ten most common items recorded during this worldwide cleanup.

“Plastic straws are made of material that is designed to last for decades, yet they are generally used for less than 30 minutes and then thrown away,” said Christina Trapani, program manager for the Keep It Beachy Clean program. “We’re doing this to bring awareness to the issue of plastic pollution in our oceans. There are many single-use plastics, like straws, that are avoidable or have reusable alternatives. Using a reusable straw or no straw at all is a small habit change with a big impact.”

On Earth Day, 66 local dining establishments participated in the straw-free event. The partners hope more restaurants will register for the September promotion at [www.keepitbeachyclean.org/strawfree](http://www.keepitbeachyclean.org/strawfree). In addition to visibility on the website, participating



restaurants will receive branded window clings, tabletop signs and kids' placemats. An offering of paper straws will also be supplied to serve customers by request. Individuals can opt out as well when they take an [online pledge](#) and by letting servers know up front they don't want a straw with their drink.

"Straw-free September Days fits in nicely with our 'Choose to Refuse Single-use Plastics' initiative," said Katie Cullipher, an askHRgreen.org team leader. "Saying 'no' to plastic straws, utensils, grocery bags, coffee stirrers and polystyrene to-go containers may be the single most important thing you can do to reduce plastic in our oceans, litter on our streets, dangers to wildlife, and landfills filled to the brim."

The promotion will run through September, or as long as supplies last. For details or to sign up, visit

[keepitbeachyclean/strawfree](http://keepitbeachyclean/strawfree) and [www.askHRgreen.org](http://www.askHRgreen.org)

**About Keep It Beachy Clean** Keep It Beachy Clean is a program of Clean Virginia Waterways of Longwood University. The Virginia Beach Resort Advisory Commission's G.R.E.E.N. Committee serves as the advisory committee to the Keep It Beachy Clean Program. See a list of our sponsors and partners (<https://keepitbeachyclean.org/support/>). Please help support Keep It Beachy Clean by donating to Clean Virginia Waterways [here](#). Find Keep It Beachy Clean on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) for all the latest updates on Straw-Free Hampton Roads!

**About askHRgreen.org** [askHRgreen.org](http://askHRgreen.org) is your go-to resource for all things green in Hampton Roads – from recycling tips and pointers for keeping local waterways clean to water-saving ideas and simple steps to make local living easy on the environment. Launched in 2011, the region-wide public awareness and education campaign is administered through the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission and powered by the following members: The cities of Chesapeake, Franklin, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Virginia Beach, and Williamsburg; the counties of Gloucester, Isle of Wight, James City, Southampton, Surry and York; the town of Smithfield; and HRSD. Like askHRgreen.org on [Facebook](#), follow on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#), tune in to [YouTube](#) and catch the "Let's Talk Green" [blog](#), written by a team of local experts.