



Thank you for your interest in the second annual STRAW-FREE Earth Day! This year, Keep It Beachy Clean (a program of Clean Virginia Waterways of Longwood University) has teamed up with askHRgreen.org to make this event a Hampton Roads-wide effort. We are excited, and hope you are equally as excited, to give this campaign a one-day trial in Hampton Roads. You may have seen the movement on the issue of plastic straws through social media and news media. Restaurants all over the world are implementing straw-reduction policies such as using paper straws, offering straws only upon request or getting rid of straws all together.

### **The Problem**

- Single-use plastic straws are made of a material that is designed to last for decades, yet millions of single-use plastic straws are generally used for less than 30 minutes then thrown away.
- Single-use plastic straws are one of the most commonly found items on our beaches and waterways. The Ocean Conservancy has continuously ranked straws among the top ten most littered items through data collected during the International Coastal Cleanup.
- Single-use plastic straws are made from fossil fuels and cannot be recycled in Hampton Roads (or most places).
- Straws that enter our waterways can break up into smaller pieces over time, persisting for years and being accidentally ingested by marine wildlife.

### **Straw-Free in Virginia Beach**

In 2018, Keep It Beachy Clean initiated a Straw-Free Earth Day campaign in Virginia Beach with a focus on the Virginia Beach Oceanfront. Within just a few weeks, 32 Virginia Beach restaurants signed up to go straw-free for Earth Day ([see list here](#)). Each restaurant was provided with table tents, menu cards, door signs and a sample of paper straws to try for customers who requested them. The feedback from both restaurant participants and customers was very positive. Some restaurants have continued their straws-on-request policies, have switched to paper straws and even continue to use the Keep It Beachy Clean educational materials.



For 2019, Keep it Beachy Clean has partnered with askHRgreen.org and would like to see all of Hampton Roads try a Straw-Free (or Straws by request only) Day on Earth Day (Monday, April 22, 2019) or even the entire Earth Day weekend (April 20-22, also Easter weekend). We have created a toolkit to help participating restaurants

educate customers about the issue and help your staff have a smooth Straw-Free day. We will also be providing materials such as table tents, menu cards, window clings, paper straws and kids' placemats, all of which can be used beyond Earth Day if you already have a straw-reduction policy in place or choose to start one. Please fill out the form on our website (<https://keepitbeachyclean.org/strawfree/>) to sign up and receive supplies. You will find a link to graphics that you can use on your social media platforms to give your customers the heads up and a link to see a list of other participating restaurants. We will share your participation on our social media and websites. We also hope to pick up some press coverage regarding this event. Feel free to contact Christina at [beachycleanvabeach@gmail.com](mailto:beachycleanvabeach@gmail.com) for more information.

If all goes well, we hope that you will consider a "Straws upon request" policy for the future!

### **Tips for you and your staff**

- Place info cards on tables or your menus to let your customers know that if they would like a straw, they can request one from their server. Place the supplied flyers on your doors and/or host stand so your customers are aware that you are participating in this event on Earth Day.
- Hide the plastic straws! It's a habit for most servers and bartenders to place a straw in every drink that is served. Place your straw supplies in a not so convenient place (under the bar, behind the counter) so that staff can work towards breaking that habit.
- To save time, servers might want to explain the event while taking drink orders. This might help avoid running back to get a straw for someone who forgot to ask!
- Use the social media graphics provided in the Straw Free Earth Day toolkit to get the word out to your customers. Don't forget to hashtag! #StrawFreeHamptonRoads #strawlessocean #stopsucking
- Have fun with it! We suspect you may hear from several customers who appreciate your participation in this effort.

[Beachycleanvb.com/strawfreevb](http://Beachycleanvb.com/strawfreevb)

[#StopSucking and Help Create a #StrawlessOcean](#)

[Adrian Grenier On Strawless September](#)

[Straws Film](#)

[The Last Plastic Straw](#)

[The Lonely Whale Foundation](#)

[Strawless Ocean](#)

2018 Straw-Free press:

<https://wtkr.com/2018/04/13/local-environmental-group-asking-restaurants-to-skip-the-straw/>

[https://pilotonline.com/news/local/environment/article\\_01a96cde-8a9f-11e8-b0c1-5f9419414119.html](https://pilotonline.com/news/local/environment/article_01a96cde-8a9f-11e8-b0c1-5f9419414119.html)

[https://pilotonline.com/life/wildlife-nature/coastal-journal/article\\_fdf8053c-3cd3-11e8-811b-f3ca3c1bbee4.html](https://pilotonline.com/life/wildlife-nature/coastal-journal/article_fdf8053c-3cd3-11e8-811b-f3ca3c1bbee4.html)

<https://wtkr.com/2018/08/10/its-the-last-straw-well-plastic-straw-for-many-hampton-roads-businesses/>