

## **Environmental Groups Thank New Jersey for Passage of Strongest Skip the Stuff Legislation in Country**

*For Immediate Release:* Tuesday, January 20, 2026

**Contacts:**

- Marta Young, Clean Water Action – [myoung@cleanwater.org](mailto:myoung@cleanwater.org), (513) 259-3706
- Brian Thompson, Monmouth Beach Environmental Commission – [brianreporter1@gmail.com](mailto:brianreporter1@gmail.com), (646) 773-9479
- Doug O’Malley, Environment New Jersey – [domally@environmentnewjersey.org](mailto:domally@environmentnewjersey.org), (917) 449-6812
- Lois Kraus, Beyond Plastics New Jersey – [beyondplasticsnj@gmail.com](mailto:beyondplasticsnj@gmail.com), (908) 577-1428
- Meg Sulzberg, Clean Ocean Action – [msulzberg@cleanoceanaction.org](mailto:msulzberg@cleanoceanaction.org), (732) 872-0111
- John Weber, Oceana – [jweber@oceana.org](mailto:jweber@oceana.org), (732) 567-1787
- Judith Enck, Beyond Plastics – [judithenck@bennington.edu](mailto:judithenck@bennington.edu), (518) 605-1770
- Brooke Helmick, New Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance – [brooke@njeja.org](mailto:brooke@njeja.org), (909) 919-4318
- Matt Gove, Surfrider Foundation – [mgove@surfrider.org](mailto:mgove@surfrider.org), (952) 250-4545
- Jennifer Coffey, Association of NJ Environmental Commissions – [jcoffey@anjec.org](mailto:jcoffey@anjec.org), (973) 539-7547
- Molly Cleary, Clean Water Action – [mcleary@cleanwater.org](mailto:mcleary@cleanwater.org), (609) 325-1488

**Trenton, New Jersey (January 20, 2026)** – A coalition of environmental groups applaud Governor Murphy for signing the strongest Skip the Stuff legislation (S3195/A5157) in the nation. This legislation establishes on a state-wide basis what over 60 NJ towns are already doing by having single-use utensils and condiment packets provided only when a person wants them.

We want to thank the prime sponsors in both the NJ Senate and Assembly for their leadership - Prime Senate sponsors Bob Smith and Raj Mukerji as well as Assemblywoman Collazos-Gill. Their leadership has secured a reduction in single-use plastics while providing financial savings to New Jerseyans.

This environmental victory is the result of hard work by volunteers, municipal governments, and students working at the local level to advance this policy.

“Skip the Stuff is practical legislation that reduces waste and toxics while saving money,” **said Marta Young, Zero Waste Specialist, Clean Water Action.** “By passing Skip the Stuff, New Jersey is a national leader in reducing single-use plastic while respecting customer choice and supporting local businesses. Every fork and ketchup packet adds up. We thank New Jersey’s legislative champions and local advocates for understanding that small things cause big problems and for providing a great model for other states to follow.”

“Going Green almost always saves ‘green,’ in this case restaurants will save real dollars by not giving out so much waste thus making this a prime example of how we can have a win-win for the environment and small businesses,” **reported Brian Thompson, Monmouth Beach Environmental Commissioner.**

“Skip the Stuff is common-sense legislation to reduce plastic waste and pollution and keep millions of kitchen junk drawers free of unneeded plastic utensils from home delivery. This law ensures that people get what they ask for and will reduce plastic litter and single-use plastics that can’t be recycled,” **said Doug O’Malley, Director of Environment New Jersey.** “Dozens of towns across New Jersey have already implemented this concept, and it’s been successful for both customers and businesses. We thank Gov. Murphy for signing this bill into law and the leadership of Sen. Bob Smith and Asw. Alixon Collazos-Gill getting this bill passed on the last day of the legislative session.”

“Grassroots advocacy from Environmental Commissions, Green Teams, students, and volunteer environmentalists were instrumental in getting this bill over the finish line, **said Lois Kraus, Beyond Plastics NJ.** “NJ citizens are signaling they want less plastic, less waste and cleaner natural resources.”

"New Jersey's Skip the Stuff law is an important step for cleaner beaches and a healthier ocean. In 2024, Clean Ocean Action volunteers removed 2,193 plastic forks, knives, and spoons from New Jersey's shores, and 36,943 plastic utensils over the past decade. This law cuts that pollution off at the source, and we applaud the state for taking action. COA looks forward to seeing less single-use plastic items littered on beaches and in communities as a result of this law," said **Meg Sulzberg, Plastic Free Sea Coordinator at Clean Ocean Action.**

"Oceana applauds New Jersey lawmakers for addressing plastic pollution by passing Skip the Stuff — a commonsense step to cut back on single-use plastic," said **John Weber, Oceana's senior field representative.** "Too often, takeout orders come loaded with plastic utensils and condiment packets that customers didn't ask for, and those items quickly become waste. This law will mean less single-use plastic in the oceans and savings for restaurants."

"From a national perspective, this is an incredibly important bill that will reduce unnecessary plastic in the Garden State," said **Judith Enck, president of Beyond Plastics,** former EPA regional administrator, and co-author of "The Problem With Plastic." "With dwindling landfill space, polluting waste incinerators, and treasured places like the Jersey Shore and other environmentally sensitive areas at risk, New Jersey lawmakers should continue advancing policies that put people over plastic."

"In a time of over-production and a proliferation of plastic waste, clogging not only our kitchen drawers, but landfills and incinerators in environmental justice communities, Skip the Stuff is a clear, financially feasible, and community-oriented solution. I'm grateful for the many environmental advocates, public health experts, the New Jersey legislature, and Governor Murphy for passing this legislation and supporting a cultural shift towards decreasing single-use plastic consumption," said **Brooke Helmick with New Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance.**

"New Jersey residents are increasingly worried about the health impacts from plastic pollution. We thank the NJ Legislature for passing this important bill, which will save restaurants money and reduce plastic litter and pollution in our State," said **Matt Gove, Mid-Atlantic Policy Manager for Surfrider Foundation.**

"With the enactment of the Skip the Stuff Law, New Jersey continues our national leadership adopting tangible actions to reduce plastic pollution," said **Jennifer M. Coffey, Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC).** "Skip the Stuff will save restaurant money and reduce plastic pollution by ending the waste of most plastic utensils that go directly from takeout to trash."

"This legislation is common sense and an excellent education tool. When we know better, we do better. That is exactly what Skip the Stuff does. It informs both the food providers and the consumers on how our every day decisions can have an impact not only on our environment, but also on our finances. With such successes in already Skip the Stuff compliant towns, I am excited to see how we can thrive together as this is made into a state change," said **Molly Cleary, Environmental Advocate for Clean Water Action.**

### **The key provisions of the law:**

- Single-use cutlery and condiments only provided when requested - only types and amounts expressly requested.
- Applies to take-out and dine-in full-service restaurants with seating capacity of 10 or more.
- Applies to food service businesses regardless of whether the customer's meal order is placed in person, over the phone, online, or using other available means or methods. The default selection for online ordering must be "no utensils or condiments".
- A 180-day education campaign will be developed to educate people on the financial and environmental benefits of reducing single-use utensils and condiments.
- This bill goes into effect on August 1, 2026.