



Executive Action Sheet for Senate Legislation

Senate Bill 329-

Resolution 329-

I, Meghana Boojala, President of the Student Assembly of William & Mary do hereby:

Approve

Veto

The Student Assembly Senate Legislation:



Meghana Boojala

President, 329th Student Assembly (21-22)

DATE:

A Bill

To allow RSO's to remain in compliance with Virginia law while pursuing sustainable options

The Diverting from Single-Use Plastics Act

An Act of the 329th Student Assembly of William & Mary,

Sponsored by Senator Mia Tilman ('24)

Co-Sponsored by Senator Maheen Saeed ('23), Senator Matthew Hwang ('25), Senator Eugene Lee ('23), Class President Vicka Heidt ('24), Senator Shaunna Scott ('23)

Supported by Secretary of Finance Suleiman Tahir, Undersecretary of Food Waste & Policy Sydney Thayer, Secretary of Sustainability Taima Al-Iriani

WHEREAS, Virginia Governor Ralph Northam signed Executive Order 77 on March 23rd, 2021 which bans “state institutions of higher education, and their concessioners (Agency or Agencies) ... [from] buying, selling, or distributing these specific items: disposable plastic bags, single-use plastic, and polystyrene food service containers, plastic straws, and cutlery, and single-use plastic water bottles...”¹;

WHEREAS, as a public university in the Commonwealth of Virginia, William & Mary and all organizations on campus must abide by Virginia law;

WHEREAS, one of the missions of the Student Assembly is to support students and Registered Student Organizations (RSO), including through financially supporting RSO operations. This would also include assisting our students and RSO's in abiding by state law while simultaneously ensuring the success of student life initiatives and RSO events;

WHEREAS, sustainable single-use plastic alternatives such as compostable items or recyclable items typically are more expensive compared to single-use plastic options;

WHEREAS, all RSO's budgeted their line-item requests during the budgeting process under the assumption that they could request cheaper, single-use plastic options and thus current student organization budgets do not reflect a knowledge of this newly enacted state mandate;

WHEREAS, Student Assembly has historically demonstrated a commitment to pursuing sustainability on campus, and changes to abide by the new mandate would also assist in furthering our sustainability commitments and efforts within our organization;

1

<https://www.governor.virginia.gov/media/governorvirginiagov/executive-actions/EO-77-Virginia-Leading-by-Example-to-Reduce-Plastic-Pollution-and-Solid-Waste.pdf>

WHEREAS, some RSO's who have attempted to purchase items such as utensils have found that their initial approved budget request is now insufficient for purchasing the quantity of these items needed at the higher cost when trying to purchase sustainable single-use plastic alternatives;

WHEREAS, the success of RSO events shouldn't be sacrificed for the sake of abiding by the new Executive Order when RSO's had no knowledge of this mandate prior to requesting their budget;

WHEREAS, RSO's are expected to submit a budget request for the upcoming fiscal year with the knowledge and consideration for this mandate, and Student Assembly will no longer cover additional costs beyond the end of the 2021-2022 academic school year, seeing as this is a one-time exception given the unique circumstances of the timing of the mandate and our own budgeting process.

Now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Student Assembly of William & Mary:

1. Approves covering the additional, unexpected cost increases associated with all purchase requests that originally budgeted for single-use plastics and now are purchasing more sustainable alternatives to remain in compliance with Virginia law;
2. Allocates this money from the Student Assembly Reserves;
3. Encourages Registered Student Organizations to still remain budget-conscious by purchasing more cost-friendly options as much as possible.