



## SB 378 (Gonzalez) Styrofoam Ban in State Parks

### SUMMARY

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Senate Bill (SB) 378 protects our scenic oceans, coastline, and recreational protected areas by prohibiting individuals from bringing expanded polystyrene (EPS) (“Styrofoam”) food containers and coolers onto State Beaches or into State Parks.

SB 378 would also require the Department of State Parks and Recreation (State Parks) to create educational materials about available alternatives to EPS in relevant languages.

### EXISTING LAW

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SB 1335 (Allen, Chapter 610, Statutes of 2018) requires that food sold on state property be served in containers that are compostable, recyclable, or reusable. This measure also applies to concessionaires located in units of the State Parks.

SB 8 (Glazer, Chapter 761, Statutes of 2019 ) established a ban on smoking on State Beaches and Parks. The law required State Parks to create signage to notify visitors of the prohibition. Violations are punishable by a fine of up to \$25.

SB 54 (Allen, Chapter 75, Statutes of 2022) created additional recycling requirements on single-use plastics, including EPS. Foam coolers were not included in SB 54.

### BACKGROUND/PROBLEM

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Plastic pollution continues to be a serious problem in California and especially impacts beaches, coastal

habitats, and wildlife. California spends an estimated \$428 million annually on beach cleanup efforts.<sup>1</sup> In 2018, over 37% of the litter collected on California Coastal Cleanup Day was food packaging.<sup>2</sup>

As plastics break down they produce methane, a potent greenhouse gas.<sup>3</sup> EPS is particularly pernicious because it is designed to break apart easily, leading to more problems with microplastic pollution.<sup>4</sup> Polystyrene packaging represents a significant source of both marine and coastal microplastics.<sup>5</sup> Studies have found that EPS microplastics pose a threat to human health<sup>6</sup> and can serve as carriers for heavy metals.<sup>7</sup> Affordable alternatives to EPS food containers and coolers already exist and are readily available.

Given the numerous and harmful impacts EPS has on the environment, wildlife, and humans, 129 jurisdictions in California have taken measures to restrict the use or sale of EPS.<sup>8</sup> Despite these efforts, and other state laws seeking to end our reliance on single-use plastics, there is no current statewide prohibition on the use of EPS in our State Parks or on our increasingly vulnerable State Beaches.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.opc.ca.gov/programs-summary/marine-pollution/plastics/>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.coastal.ca.gov/publiced/ccd/history.html>.

<sup>3</sup> <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0200574>.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.unep.org/resources/report/drowning-plastics-marine-litter-and-plastic-waste-vital-graphics>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.gesamp.org/publications/microplastics-in-the-marine-environment-part-2>.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-020-64464-9>.

<sup>7</sup> <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10646-020-02329-7>.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.cawrecycles.org/polystyrene-local-ordinances>.

## **SOLUTION**

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SB 378 would prohibit individuals from bringing EPS containers onto State Beaches or in units of the State Park System. The intent of this legislation is education and it would require State Parks to develop educational materials about available alternatives. State Parks would also be required to post signage informing users of the EPS prohibition.

SB 378 requires that a violation of the measure would result first in a warning by an officer of the State Parks, and any subsequent violations would be subject to a fine of up to \$25.

## **SUPPORT**

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[Azul](#) (Sponsor)

## **CONTACT**

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