



Alaska Association of Student Governments

Resolution #10

Sustainability and Waste Reduction at Haines High School

Submitted by: Selby Long, Haines High School Student Council

April 23, 2025

Be it resolved by the Alaska Association of Student Governments that AASG supports Haines High School implementing various measures in the food program to promote sustainability.

- 1. Whereas,** Haines High School students have noticed an overwhelming amount of plastic packaging used in our food service program;
- 2. Whereas,** public schools in the United States produce over 14,500 tons of waste every day, with a majority of that coming from the cafeteria¹;
- 3. Whereas,** over the course of one nine-month school year, each student eating a disposable lunch produces 67 pounds of waste¹;
- 4. Whereas,** in a focus group, Haines High School Students identified reducing the amount of overall waste produced by our school and cafeteria to protect the environment as a top priority;
- 5. Whereas,** the main concern to address in this focus group was plastic packaged products and how our “Nutrition Break” meals are packaged;
- 6. Whereas,** Nutrition Break is a designated break for students to eat a free breakfast served in a to-go fashion;
- 7. Whereas,** not only are these meals served with many items packaged in plastic, but there is not an effective recycling system in place for students to properly dispose of their waste, resulting in most plastic going into the landfill;
- 8. Whereas,** students are throwing away packaging for food as well as single use utensils and plates every day during Nutrition Break;
- 9. Whereas,** the lunch program utilizes reusable hard plastic trays that are washed after every use but there is no such option for Nutrition Break;

10. **Whereas**, the directors of the Haines School food program, when interviewed, said that the reason for continuing to use plastic packaged products was initially due to COVID-19 restrictions, and remained because of a lack of staff and overall expense of products²;
11. **Whereas**, around 30-40% of food comes into the school kitchen individually packaged in plastic²;
12. **Whereas**, when asked if there would be a way to make the program most sustainable and generate less waste the program directors answered that their biggest concern is convenience and limited funds²;
13. **Whereas**, the food program directors noted taking some steps towards sustainability, such as replacing disposable paper water cups with reusable plastic ones, and that they would be open to more changes presented by students²;
14. **Whereas**, four possible avenues to address these concerns include:
 - a. Exploring alternatives to plastic packaged foods in the food program;
 - b. Requesting that the school prioritize purchasing products with the least amount of plastic packaging;
 - c. Placing more recycling stations through the high school pod area and educating students on how to use them so plastic items are not ending up in the landfill;
 - d. Replacing the disposable paper plates and silverware used during Nutrition Break with reusable materials;
15. **Whereas**, not only will reducing the amount of plastic be beneficial to the environment, but studies show that children pick up sustainable behavior at school, and young people take eco-friendly actions after they recognize their benefits³;
16. **Whereas**, if we start introducing eco-friendly behaviors to children at a young age, we can raise their awareness of sustainability and influence how they convey beliefs back to the families through “reverse socialization;”³
17. **Whereas**, studies show that children who used recycling bins in schools were more likely to ask their families about recycling at home, promoting even more sustainability in their local areas³;

Therefore, be it resolved that the Alaska Association of Student Governments supports the Haines School food program implementing more environmentally friendly practices to promote sustainability for the Haines community.

Action Statement: If passed by the general assembly of AASG, this resolution will be brought to the attention of the Haines School Administration, Food Service Program and Haines Borough School Board for their consideration.

Sources:

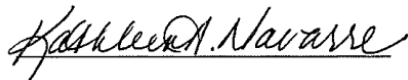
1. “For Healthier, Greener School Lunches We Should Cut Plastic Waste.” *Environment America*, [environmentamerica.org/articles/for-healthier-greener-school-lunches-we-should-cut-plastic-waste/#:~:text=School%20lunches%20produce%20a%20lot,produces%2067%20pounds%20of%20waste](https://www.environmentamerica.org/articles/for-healthier-greener-school-lunches-we-should-cut-plastic-waste/#:~:text=School%20lunches%20produce%20a%20lot,produces%2067%20pounds%20of%20waste). Accessed 20 Apr. 2025.
2. McLaughlin, Kaitlin and Haas, Dick. Personal Interview. 21 April 2025.
3. “School cafeterias use tons of single-use containers that go to landfill. Here’s how to change that”
www.fastcompany.com/90828505/school-cafeterias-single-use-packaging-waste-circular-economy-reuse. Accessed 20 Apr. 2025.

Resolution passes with unanimous consent

Passed by the Spring 2025 General Assembly of AASG hosted by Sitka High School and Mt Edgcumbe High School



AASG Vice President, Francis Myers



AASG Executive Director, Kathleen Navarre

