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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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City of Miami Beach Moves toward Becoming a Plastic Free City

— Strengthening Citywide Litter Laws —

Miami Beach, FL – As an environmental leader among local governments in Florida and nationwide, the City of Miami Beach has spearheaded waste reduction initiatives, including banning polystyrene in an effort to preserve and enhance its unique, coastal environment.

Today, the City Commission took it a step farther by unanimously passing an ordinance that prohibits single-use plastic beverage straws and stirrers on the City’s beaches, streets, parks, sidewalk cafes, docks, marinas, waterways and other public places as well as banning single-use plastic bags from being distributed by sidewalk cafes.

“We want to be the most plastic free city in the world, and we are making a substantial step towards that goal,” expressed Mayor Dan Gelber. “It is good for business and good for the environment.”

The ordinances will be phased out with the full enforcement taking place February 1, 2019. Over the course of the next three months, the City will launch a plastic-free public education campaign to inform sidewalk cafés, special event permittees and City contractors on the provisions of the regulation, as well as encourage reusable alternatives.

“Plastic straws and bags are the most commonly found litter item on our urban island -- taking hundreds of years to degrade,” noted Director of Environmental and Sustainability Elizabeth Wheaton. “They also pose a significant threat to our natural wildlife, as well as our drainage system. By prohibiting these disposable food service articles, the City hopes to significantly reduce the amount of litter and pollutants on land and in the water for years to come.”

Businesses providing plastic straws or bags with the service and delivery of any beverage to patrons will be fined anywhere from \$100 to \$1,500 for the first offense – with the highest fines being given to plastic straw violators along the beach, parks, waterways, docks and marinas.

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