

**Town of Lexington
Motion
2022 Annual Town Meeting**

ARTICLE 27 ZERO WASTE RESOLUTION

MOTION:

WHEREAS, the Town of Lexington generates over 9000 tons of trash annually, which is incinerated at the Wheelabrator Incinerator in North Andover with residual ash disposed of at the Ash Landfill in Shrewsbury; and

WHEREAS, burning waste and burying toxic ash have the following impacts: causing damage to human health and the environment, wasting natural resources, generating greenhouse gases, contributing to the loss of biodiversity, and wrongly transferring health and environmental harms to other communities and future generations; and

WHEREAS, the detrimental impacts of Lexington's waste disposal are exacerbated by the incineration facility and ash landfill being located adjacent to financially disadvantaged, minority, and English isolated populations, who face disproportionate environmental burdens and are at disproportionate risk for negative health outcomes, i.e., "Environmental Justice communities"; and

WHEREAS, food waste makes up at least 25%, and thus the biggest component, of residential waste; and

WHEREAS, food waste is composed of mostly water and burning it requires additional fuel to be used, making waste hauling and incineration even less efficient and more polluting; and

WHEREAS, since FY 2016, the cost of Lexington's waste incineration has increased by 20% and the cost of curbside recycling has increased by 80%; and

WHEREAS, Lexington's contract for solid waste disposal expires in June 2023 and the next contract would potentially commit the town to waste disposal practices through June 2028; and

WHEREAS, MassDEP projects that in-state landfill capacity for solid waste will decline to nearly zero by 2028, making source reduction and diversion efforts even more urgent; and

WHEREAS, the state's "2030 Solid Waste Master Plan: Working Together Toward Zero Waste" has set a goal to reduce the state's total solid waste from a 2018 baseline by 30% by 2030 and 90% by 2050; and

WHEREAS, The Town has adopted multiple policies and resolutions that recognize and take action on threats to our environment, human health and racial justice, in particular:

2013: Lexington Town Meeting adopted a Climate Change Resolution to consider climate change in all appropriate decisions.

2016: Lexington Public Schools contract for compost pickup in all nine schools.

2018: The Board of Selectmen adopted the Sustainable Action Plan and Getting to Net Zero Emissions Plan.

2020: Lexington Town Meeting approved a resolution endorsing the declaration of a climate emergency.

2020: Lexington Town Meeting adopted a Systemic Racism Resolution.

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WHEREAS, these resolutions and policies taken together reflect the values of our community with respect to sustainability and environmental justice; and

WHEREAS, the Guiding Principles of Zero Waste (“Zero Waste”) are:

- preserving natural resources by means of responsible production and consumption;
- conserving natural resources through waste prevention;
- promoting reusable products and the use of materials (glass, metal, etc.) that are durable, reusable and made from non-toxic materials;
- reducing the use of single-use, non-recyclable products and materials;
- treating waste as a resource;
- regenerating natural resources through composting and recycling;
- turning discarded resources into jobs and new products instead of trash; and
- managing waste without burning and with no discharges to land, water, or air that threaten the environment and human health; and

WHEREAS, Zero Waste minimizes resource consumption and eliminates waste whenever possible in order to conserve energy, mitigate climate change, reduce water usage, prevent the creation of toxins, and stop ecosystem destruction; and

WHEREAS, Zero Waste redesigns our systems of resource use from a linear model of take, make, use and dispose to a circular model of reuse; and

WHEREAS, Zero Waste captures our discards and uses them, instead of new resources, to make new products, creating far less pollution.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the TOWN OF LEXINGTON will hereby:

1. Adopt and model the Guiding Principles of Zero Waste as overarching goals for the community and all municipal and school operations.
2. Develop a Zero Waste Plan as soon as possible that would:
 - a. Include input from multiple stakeholders, including residents and Town staff;
 - b. Establish goals that meet or exceed the state’s 2030 Solid Waste Master Plan waste reduction goals;
 - c. Recommend short- and long-term actions that address infrastructure, policies, local and regional collaboration, education and community engagement;
 - d. Plan for town-wide compost services;
 - e. Provide a cost/benefit analysis on each waste reduction strategy under consideration; and
 - f. Prioritize solid waste reduction programs that minimize the impact on environmental justice communities.

(Revised 03/29/2022)