

**21 January 2020**

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**China announces ban on single-use plastics**

China, one of the world's biggest users of plastic, has unveiled a major plan to reduce single-use plastic across the country.

On Sunday, the National Development and Reform Commission issued the new policy, which will be implemented over the next five years.

- **Non-degradable bags will be banned in major cities by the end of 2020 and in all cities and towns by 2022**
- **Plastic bags will be banned across all cities and towns in 2022, though markets selling fresh produce will be exempt until 2025**
- **The production and sale of plastic bags that are less than 0.25mm thick will also be banned**
- **The restaurant industry has been targeted as needing to reduce the use of single-use plastic items by 30%**
- **Hotels have also been told that they must not offer free single-use plastic items by 2025**

Beijing hopes that these measures will cut plastic waste by **30%** in five years across the board.

According to the World Bank, China produced **215** million tonnes of trash in 2017, but this could rise to **500** million tonnes annually by 2030 unless further steps are taken to curb production.

A previous plastic ban was introduced in 2008 but was insufficiently adhered to. The fact that this plastic ban has been introduced amid a backdrop of wider environmentally friendly policy initiatives, has been seen by analysts as a statement of Beijing's seriousness this time. A ban on illegally produced / felled wood was also introduced on Sunday.

Environmental campaign groups overwhelmingly welcomed the news, but added the caveat to their response, that Beijing needs to also clamp down on provincial governments building coal-powered fire stations, if China is serious about implementing change.