



## Health Department

210 Central Street, Hingham, MA 02043

<https://www.hingham-ma.gov/health>

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# Hingham Water Bottle Ban

## Frequently Asked Questions for Residents

### What does the bylaw say?

The bylaw makes it unlawful to sell non-carbonated, unflavored drinking water in single-use plastic bottles of less than one gallon in the Town of Hingham, beginning January 1, 2024. There are no restrictions on residents' personal use of these products within town.



### Why water?

Since 2010, yearly water bottle consumption in the United States has grown by 40%. The best alternative is a refillable water bottle, and water is easily accessible, safe, and available through hydration stations, bubblers, and the tap. The Cleaner Greener Hingham Committee is partnering with the Weir River Water System to install two additional public bottle filling stations in Hingham. The Town of Hingham has also won a grant for a third additional public bottle filling station. The Weir River Water System tests for over 100 compounds that are important to public health. All are below amounts allowed by state and federal law.

### What is the penalty for non-compliance?

There are no restrictions on residents who choose to use and carry single use plastic water bottles. While we encourage people to use reusable bottles, we understand there are situations that may not be possible.



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Stores or people who sell this product would be subject to the following:

- First violation - written warning
- Second violation - \$100 fine
- Third violation - \$200 fine
- Fourth & subsequent violations - \$300 fine

### **Who else is doing this?**

Twenty-four other Massachusetts communities already have similar bylaws in effect, including fifteen communities on Cape Cod and all of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket. Looking around the country, New York, California, and Oregon have all passed legislation to limit single-use plastics. Globally, Canada banned the importation and manufacture of certain single-use plastics at the end of last year. The European Union, the United Kingdom, India, China, Kenya, and Chile have all passed legislation banning certain single-use plastic items.

### **How does this bylaw align with Hingham's goals?**

Hingham is an environmentally-conscious community. The recently revised Master Plan lists protecting the environment and preparing for climate change as a top goal. In 2021, the Town adopted a goal of net zero carbon emissions by 2040 and has since released a Climate Action Plan, which includes calls for restricting single use plastics, such as water bottles. Plastic production, disposal, and incineration is a carbon-intensive process (equaling 190 coal power plants in 2019) that is not in line with our voted upon goals.

### **Why don't we ban all single-use plastic bottles?**

According to the United Nations, 91% of all plastics produced are for single use, items used once then thrown away. Single-use plastic water bottles are replaceable and serve as a first step toward Hingham's net zero goals.