UK Government to ban the use of plastic straws within the year

Wednesday 25 April, 2018

The UK Government have announced their plans to ban disposable plastic bar equipment by the end of the year. The ban will include straws, stirrers and plastic stemmed cotton buds.

The announcement was made last week at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in London. At the meeting the government unveiled plans to work with the industry in developing alternatives and ensuring that there was time for businesses to adapt to the changes.

The plan has been devised to combat the extensive plastic waste that has been causing damage to the environment. The government say that in reducing the 8.5 billion plastic straws that are thrown away each year, the environment will benefit greatly.

The move comes after the hospitality industry has seen a host of businesses rejecting plastic straws in recent months. 60 independent festivals within the UK have expressed that they will ban plastic straws from their events this Summer. Catering Supplies and menu holder specialists, Smart Hospitality Supplies, have also committed to replacing their offering of plastic straws and stirrers with more environmentally friendly options. This sets an example for the rest of the industry whilst also providing the sector with better choice when searching for alternatives.

Supermarkets have also seen a change in attitudes, with leading supermarket, Iceland, committing to eliminate plastics from its own brand products by 2023. These changes have signified a change in attitude from society in large and also appears to have forced the governments hand in announcing their commitment to the same cause.

Prime minister Theresa May said: “Plastic waste is one of the greatest environmental challenges facing the world, which is why protecting the marine environment is central to our agenda at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.

“The UK government is a world leader on this issue, and the British public have shown passion and energy embracing our plastic bag charge and microbead ban, and today we have put forward ambitious plans to further reduce plastic waste from straws, stirrers and cotton buds.”

Environment secretary Michael Gove added: “Single-use plastics are a scourge on our seas and lethal to our precious environment and wildlife so it is vital we act now. We have already banned harmful microbeads and cut plastic bag use, and now we want to take action on straws, stirrers and cotton buds to help protect our marine life.

“We have seen a number of bars, retailers and restaurants stepping up to the plate and cutting plastic use, however it’s only through government, the public and businesses working together that we will protect our environment for the next generation – we all have a role to play in turning the tide on plastic.”

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