

## EARTH DAY EDITION

## Houston, we have a trash problem!

**D**id you know we send about 4,000 tons of trash to the Lockwood landfill every day during the winter? That's like sending over 700 elephants to the landfill every day! Washoe County generates 7.9 pounds of waste per person per day, nearly double the national average of 4.4 pounds. With the inception of disposable plastic, it has become far too convenient to use these materials, which has led us towards becoming a "throw-away" society.



Disposable plastic silverware, cups, straws, and plastic water bottles for instance, are only used once before being sent to the trash where they live in our landfills for eternity. Our trash can also end up somewhere in our environment as litter. Scientists predict that by the year 2050 plastic waste will outnumber fish in our oceans. Plastic doesn't decompose like many other materials, but rather breaks up into tiny pieces called microplastics that are getting into our waterways and bioaccumulating in our ecosystems.

So it's time to rethink this disposable mindset and start taking simple steps towards positive



change. Have you heard of the 5Rs? The 5 R's were started by Bea Johnson who lives in a "Zero Waste Household." They are Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Rot. Start by refusing single use items like straws, disposable silverware, cups, and plates, food items wrapped in plastic, and those dreaded single use plastic water bottles. Instead, bring your own reusable items with you like a reusable grocery bag. Some places, like WINCO, offer a discount to customers for every reusable bag they bring to the store.

Next reduce the amount of waste you are producing. Try making your own natural cleaning products by using white vinegar and baking soda instead of buying cleaning supplies in plastic bottles. Visit the Bulk Section at your grocery store to avoid all of that unnecessary excess packaging when grocery shopping.



Next reuse and find other creative uses for items rather than purchasing disposable items meant for one-time use. For example, aside from storing your marmalade, glass jars also make for great storage containers after you've used all of the jelly for those PB&Js. Use metal silverware at your event gatherings instead of those pesky single-use plastic silverware. Head to a thrift store and buy a bunch at a great price you only have to pay once!

After you have refused, reduced and reused you recycle what is left, which should be hard to do anything. Be sure to recycle right and check out KTMB's recycling guide if you are unsure on how to recycle certain items.

Lastly we rot or compost food that can be turned into nutrient rich soil. Collect all the veggie and fruit scraps, place it into a bin and let nature do all the work! There are so many simple steps we can all take to make a positive impact and make Earth Day, Every Day! Just remember that there is no "away". Visit [www.ktmb.org](http://www.ktmb.org) for more information on ways you can help keep our community clean!



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