



CITY OF GALAX, VIRGINIA

111 East Grayson Street • Galax, VA 24333 • Phone: 276-236-2131

The Virginia General Assembly passed a law in 2021 that bans the use of Expanded Polystyrene (EPS), known commonly as Styrofoam, by food vendors. Polystyrene takes over 500 years to break down, is frequently littered, breaks into microplastics that are easily ingested by wildlife and contaminate the environment, and is linked to cancer and nervous system damage.

The Ban officially took effect on July 1, 2025, and it applies to food vendors with over 20 locations in the state. Vendors operating fewer than 20 Virginia locations were given an extension of one year and must comply by July 1, 2026.

By law, localities may grant food vendors exemptions of up to one year for compliance with the EPS ban. The exemption can be renewed if the vendor meets the criteria and reapplies before the exemption expires.

Eligible food vendors may apply for exemption to the City of Galax and must show that (1) it has “no reasonable alternative”; and that (2) compliance with the law will “cause significant economic hardship.” A mere marginal increase in costs, without more explanation, will not be deemed to qualify as a significant economic hardship. Responses should clearly explain hardships and detail in why the applicant believes no reasonable alternatives exist, including efforts at locating and obtaining alternative packaging.

To apply for the exemption, fill out the following form completely.

APPLICATION FORM

Business Name	
Street Address	
Address Line 2	
City / State / Zip	
Business Email	
Business Phone Number	

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1. Describe how your business has “no reasonable alternative” to the utilization of EPS.

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2. Describe the “significant economic hardship” that compliance will cause.

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Supporting Documents: Attach all supporting documents when submitting this application.

Applicant Signature	
Printed Name	
Date	

Upon receipt of a complete application, the application materials will be referred to the City Manager for consideration.