

# Environmental/Sustainability Movement

**WRA Position:** Position the WRA as a constructive partner in the debate over what sustainable business practices should be adopted as well as how best to implement the changes with the smallest impact to our industry as possible.

## Suggested Talking Points:

- WRA members believe we must all be stewards of the environment. At the same time, small business must be cautious about incurring new practices that add costs, thereby impacting the ability of restaurants to remain profitable, offer jobs, and contribute to the economy. For example, compostable and recyclable food ware products can cost nearly ten times more than current products. One restaurant estimated a \$32,000 cost to convert individual restaurants to compostable/recyclable food ware.
- Customer safety is the primary concern in choosing products. For example, current technology for fully compostable/recyclable food ware does not perform well with hot drinks or food. Restaurants must ensure that customers receive food that is safe, both in preparation and in packaging.
- WRA believes that state and local governments must evaluate the positive and negative consequences of changing current practices. WRA is committed to working to develop options to improve sustainability that ensure customer safety in a manner that allows businesses to grow and prosper.

**Background:** Over the past few years a debate has emerged about how to decrease the country's consumption of resources (energy, water, land, etc). Ideas have surfaced from many stakeholders on how to establish more sustainable practices. Many of these ideas add time and cost to running a business, and need to be balanced with the benefits of resource consumption both locally and nationally.

As users of electricity, water, packaging, food, and food waste, restaurants are naturally part of any discussion on how to become more sustainable. From moving toward energy efficient equipment, to composting food waste and recycling fry oil, our industry has approached these ideas with an open mind and desire to reduce our impact on the environment.