

## **Resolution Regarding the Use of Styrofoam**

WHEREAS the Preamble of the SSMU constitution states: "The Students' Society shall act in the best interests of its membership as a whole," and;

WHEREAS styrofoam cups were found to have lost mass after exposure to hot liquid (i.e. the cup had melted into the drink) and by 1986 styrene was found in 100 percent of human fat tissue samples taken by the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency), and;

WHEREAS short-term exposure to styrene can result in mucus membrane and eye irritation (when gaseous) as well as gastrointestinal effects, and Chronic (long-term) exposure to styrene in humans results in effects on the central nervous system (CNS), such as headache, fatigue, weakness, and depression, CNS dysfunction, hearing loss, and peripheral neuropathy, and;

WHEREAS the Preamble of the SSMU Constitution also states: "The Students' Society commits to demonstrating leadership in matters of human rights, social justice and environmental protection. The Society shall be mindful of the direct and indirect effects corporations, businesses and organizations have on their social, political, economic, and environmental surroundings," and;

WHEREAS manufacture and disposal of Styrofoam can either release dangerous toxic chemicals and contaminants into the air (when incinerated) or leach these chemicals into the groundwater (when buried), so contributing to environmental degradation, and;

WHEREAS Styrofoam is non-recyclable and so is an open cycle that must use up ever more resources in order to continue, and;

WHEREAS Styrofoam is manufactured using oil, which contributes to a range of socio-economic problems due to dependence on foreign and often unstable countries for its production, and;

WHEREAS alternative materials, such as paper and cornstarch, are produced in the near vicinity to the city of Montreal, and could be sourced with far less transportation, again reducing our carbon footprint, and;

WHEREAS the use of such a bio-friendly material would translate to less than ten cents to the consumers, and also encourage eco-responsible practices such as the use of personal Tupper-ware, and;

WHEREAS the use of washable, reusable plates would eliminate all transportation and production cost entirely, reducing the environmental impact to just the heat, water and soap used to clean them, and;

WHEREAS after the initial investment in reusable plates the cost of upkeep (washing) for these plates would be a fraction of even that for Styrofoam equivalents, and;

WHEREAS there is already a group active in Shatner (the Plate Club) dedicated to the sustainable replacement of Styrofoam;

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED that SSMU move towards the banning of Styrofoam in the Student Union building by the fall semester of 2010 and replace the disposable Styrofoam option with a healthier alternative, such as biodegradable corn starch plastics, and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that SSMU moves towards supporting the Plate Club to function for all meals a week in order to remove all disposable utensils and plates; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that SSMU lobby McGill administration to follow suit and eliminate the use and distribution of Styrofoam on the McGill campus, and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that SSMU distribute information to all clubs and services and to the student body on issues pertaining to Styrofoam and the Plate Club's alternatives to it.

Respectfully Submitted

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Arts Representative 2009-2010

Co-signed:

Sarah Woolf  
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