Styrofoam ban possible in South Lake Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe is contemplating regulating the type of to-go containers restaurants use, whether retail outlets can sell Styrofoam and plastic utensils, the packaging of meat in grocery stores, and what egg cartons are made of.

The elected officials on Tuesday gave staff direction to come back with verbiage for a ban on polystyrene. Having the Sustainability Commission do the research was suggested as a way to free up staff time.

The idea to essentially rid the city of Styrofoam was brought to the council by members of the public. The electeds on Oct. 17 supported investigating the idea further, but no formal vote was taken.

"I'm not opposed to a ban on take-out because there are a lot of alternatives for them to use," Councilman Tom Davis said.

What he is worried about is if something like Cup-of-Noodles would be banned. He sits on the board of Christmas Cheer and that food item is a staple for those clients.

Many restaurants in South Lake Tahoe already use environmentally friendly to-go containers. Photo/LTN

Putting in this type of ban was broached when the city was talking about the plastic bag ban in 2013. It never gained traction.

It was pointed out this week that the material is not biodegradable and has no value when it comes to recycling and weighs so little.

The council was curious to know what impact the product has on South Tahoe Refuse.

Jeff Tillman, president of South Tahoe Refuse, would not talk to *Lake Tahoe News* about the issue.

Councilwoman Wendy David, who sits on the Waste Management Authority JPA, said she would like that board to discuss polystyrene so perhaps El Dorado and Douglas counties might be part of the ban.

There are many restaurants in the area that already use a disposable product for leftovers.

Marilee Movius with the League to Save Lake Tahoe spoke in

favor of a ban, citing statistics about how bad the product is for the environment and animals.

About 100 cities in California have some sort of ban on the product.