

Six U.S. states have [banned styrofoam containers](#), most recently Colorado, New York, and Virginia. Georgia and Florida should do the same.

Of course, that is a statewide issue and Valdosta is a city. However, it is actually an advantage that the Valdosta Metropolitan Statistical Area is balkanized into four statehouse districts: that gives Valdosta, Lowndes County, and Brooks, Lanier, and Echols Counties, extra pull at the state legislature: witness any time Moody AFB is threatened. Plus recently all those state representatives plus another, and the local state senator plus another visited Valdosta with the Governor and Lt. Governor. And both Georgia U.S. Senators have visited within recent months.

Valdosta could start first. Thirteen states have [local government bans on styrofoam containers](#).

Similarly, nine states have single-use plastic bag bans. Such a [ban bill](#) was [proposed in the Georgia legislature in 2020](#). It didn't pass, but such things often take several tries. The chair of the relevant Senate committee said at the time: *"I am the biggest treehugger in the senate," said [Frank] Ginn, adding that he believes plastic bag bans should fall under local control. "I don't think it is something we really want to push legislatively to the citizens of Georgia."* He may have been referring to [a 2015 failed attempt by the legislature to prohibit local plastic bag bans](#). Twenty states, [including Georgia](#), have plastic bag bans by at least one local government. Valdosta could do this. Some Valdosta City Council members worry that the state would just overturn such a local ban, but remember, the Georgia legislature already tried that and such pre-emption did not pass.

Valdosta could pass a plastic bag ban. Or a styrofoam ban.

Downstream Patches

To actually stop the litter problem, it must be addressed at the source, as discussed above. However, some litter will get through, whether blown off parking lots or thrown out of cars. So some downstream patches are also useful.

Trash Traps

Valdosta has one [trash trap](#), at the west end of Baytree Road above Lake Sheri. It was very expensive, so nobody wants to do it that way again.



Fortunately there are much less expensive options available now, a decade later. The Valdosta Stormwater Manager and City Engineer have already attended a presentation by Osprey, maker of the Litter Gitter, a trash trap small enough for two people to carry, and which volunteers can manually empty. Osprey offers a turnkey solution in which they replace broken traps and they hire personnel to clean out the traps. Two or three traps could be very useful, for example just downstream of Berkley Drive on Twomile Branch, just downstream of Ashley Street on Onemile Branch, and on Sugar Creek either at Gornto Road or just below the Twomile Branch Confluence.

