To: Dr. Erika Paterson

From: Joanna Yu

Date: June 18, 2020

Subject: Proposal for Determining the Feasibility of Switching to More Environmentally Friendly Take-

Out Food Containers at Shota Sushi

**Introduction**

Shota Sushi is a Japanese fine dining restaurant located in the community of Kerrisdale in Vancouver. Shota Sushi’s high-quality cuisine has made it popular to both dine-in and take-out customers. On average, the restaurant’s take-out business caters to about 40 to 50 orders per day. Most take-out orders are packed in Styrofoam containers. Even though Styrofoam is not biodegradable and has been proven to cause harm to our health and the environment when disposed in landfills, many restaurants continue to use Styrofoam products to pack their take-out orders.

**Statement of Problem**

Given the frequency of take-out orders the restaurant receives, the amount of used Styrofoam containers sent to landfills can be quite substantial. Typically, an average order uses three Styrofoam containers. This amounts to 120 to 150 Styrofoam containers used to pack take-out orders per day. Styrofoam emits toxic chemicals that are both harmful to our health and the environment when exposed to sunlight. One of Styrofoam’s main component is polystyrene which contains the toxic substances styrene and benzene, suspected carcinogens that are hazardous to humans. Not only will the continued use of Styrofoam containers for take-out orders contribute to environmental degradation because it does not break down over time, but it may also affect Shota Sushi’s business. Environmentally conscious customers may stop patronizing Shota Sushi due to its continued use of Styrofoam containers for take-out orders.

**Proposed Solution**

One possible solution is to use more sustainable and eco-friendly take-out containers made from compostable paper or sugarcane to reduce harmful toxins that are environmentally degrading and hazardous to people’s health. This would significantly reduce the amount of Styrofoam containers that are disposed of in landfills. Shota Sushi’s business can also benefit from these solutions because it may help retain and attract environmentally conscious consumers to its business.

**Scope**

To assess the feasibility of the proposed solutions, I plan to pursue five areas of inquiry:

1. What benefits, if any, can a business realize in switching to more environmentally friendly food take-out containers from Styrofoam based containers?
2. What are the types of Styrofoam food container substitutes available in the market which are more environmentally friendly?
3. What is the minimum order required by suppliers for environmentally friendly food containers?
4. What are the costs of such environmentally friendly food container products?
5. Are environmentally friendly food containers readily available from suppliers?

**Methods**

Initially, I will collect primary data through a personal interview with Dan Han, the manager of Shota Sushi. Additionally, I will analyze further a more accurate figure in the number of Styrofoam containers used for take-out orders. I will also consult with suppliers regarding the availability and prices of environmentally take-out food containers. Furthermore, I will survey Shota Sushi’s take-out customers if they would continue to patronize the company if more sustainable take-out food containers will be used. Finally, I will look into the likelihood of consumers deciding not to buy a product if they knew it uses less environmentally friendly packaging like Styrofoam.

Information from secondary sources will be obtained from journals and publications on Styrofoam’s effect on the environment.

**My Qualifications**

I was a part-time server at Shota Sushi for 10 months, where I was responsible for serving dine-in and take-out customers. Through this position, I became aware of the frequency of take-out orders and how they are packaged.

**Conclusion**

Action is required to decrease the amount of Styrofoam ending up in landfills because of Shota Sushi’s choice of food take-out containers. Styrofoam is not biodegradable and causes harm to our health and the environment when disposed in landfills. Shota Sushi’s current choice of food can be improved towards a more environmentally responsible choice. By addressing the four areas of inquiry mentioned above, I can determine the feasibility of my proposed solution. With your approval, I will begin my research at once.