A Resolution in Support of Banning Plastic Litter for Special Occasions at the University of Alabama at Birmingham

WHEREAS the University of Alabama at Birmingham Undergraduate Student Government Association has the honor and responsibility of representing the entire undergraduate student voice; and

WHEREAS it is the duty of the USGA to lead the undergraduate student body towards positive and relevant changes; and

WHEREAS the use of small plastic for special occasions on UAB’s campus directly pollutes the environment and disturbs nearby ecosystems; and

WHEREAS special occasions (including but not limited to UAB Homecoming, graduation photoshoots, greek events, and other events) using confetti, glitter, and other related plastic litter are common and deeply rooted in our traditions; and

WHEREAS the plastic litter is often swept into nearby storm drains directly routed to the local bodies of water and streams; and

WHEREAS these plastic bits are broken down into microplastics that release toxic chemicals, causing hormonal imbalances, digestive harms, infertility, and cancers in the ecosystem’s wildlife; and[1]

WHEREAS National Geographic has referred to this environmental epidemic in bodies of water as “alarming” citing a study done on the Tennessee River; and[2]

WHEREAS other college campuses such as Texas State University have banned confetti and balloons at commencement [3] and local cities such as Mobile, Alabama have banned the sale, use, and possession of plastic confetti [4]

WHEREAS the University of Alabama at Birmingham is committed to including sustainability in every facet of our enterprise—education, research, patient care, economic development, and service—and banning plastic confetti, glitter, and other related plastic litter is an effective way to put into practice the principles of environmental sustainability and social justice; and

[3] Prohibited and Allowable Items: Commencement
WHEREAS by requiring more environmentally-friendly alternatives for special occasions, UAB will demonstrate a commitment to sustainability; and

WHEREAS by requiring more environmentally-friendly alternatives for special occasions, UAB will more effectively educate the campus community about the harms of plastic litter for special occasions; and

WHEREAS by requiring more environmentally-friendly alternatives for special occasions, UAB will inspire other institutions and organizations to ban plastic litter for special occasions; and

WHEREAS by requiring more environmentally-friendly alternatives for special occasions, UAB will enhance its image as a leader in sustainability and social justice issues.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the UAB USGA, representing the undergraduate student population encourages the UAB Office of Student Involvement and Leadership, the National Alumni Society, the University Events Department, any other relevant UAB groups to be better stewards of the environment by restricting the use of plastic confetti, glitter, and other forms of plastic litter. Doing so would include but not be limited to:

- Requiring that any department, college, team, registered student organization, or greek life chapter under their direct supervision include in their rules for UAB Homecoming, celebrations, or special occasions that the use of plastic confetti, glitter, and all other forms of single-use plastic litter for special occasions is prohibited;

- Encouraging organization members to use paper or biodegradable celebratory materials as an alternative;

- Advising that it is the group’s responsibility to properly clean up after the celebration or occasion.

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the UAB USGA will not fund the use of plastic litter for any registered student organization sponsored event. Any registered student organization that uses USGA funding to purchase and use plastic litter will be disqualified from seeking USGA funding in the future.

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