Eoghan Butler

Skrobacki

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Keep the Woody Ethnic Utensils

Chopsticks have been around for thousands of years and have been used by millions. In the article, *Would You Support a Ban on Disposable Chopsticks?* written by Spencer, the suggestion of the ban of chopsticks was proposed. Spencer discussed both sides of the argument; however, the author advocated for the ban by the insertion of some large numbers and the harmful effects of deforestation. Despite that, chopsticks should not be banned for many reasons; they are hygienic, and the chopstick industry helps put money and jobs towards cleaning up our forests from destructive factors. However, this industry does have the power to harm the environment by cutting down trees from inappropriate locations helping further this world's deforestation problems.

Having reusable chopsticks for disposal is more hygienic and poses less of a risk to human health. Sixteen years ago, there was a massive outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in some Asain countries. While the outbreak was being analyzed for the best plan of action to overcome the issue, many people turned to these disposable chopsticks to help the problem at hand. The use of something one time is an ideal solution over reusing reusable chopsticks. Reusable chopsticks have a greater potential to cross-contaminate food, which contributes to the spread of diseases such as the devastating SARS. Banning chopsticks would throw a wrench at public health on an international level and lead to problems in many homes and families.

In some countries, their forests are overgrown and overpopulated with some tree species; the chopstick industry has the potential to fix this problem. The overpopulation of any species, including trees, hurts ecosystems through threatening the biodiversity of their environments. This industry can be argued to be eco-friendly for it creates a win-win situation. Japan currently suffers many of the drawbacks of an overpopulation of a few species of trees in their national forests. The industry can save these forests in danger by putting jobs, money, and resources towards cutting down the excessively abundant invasive species that need to be cut down. Then, the industry can use those materials that otherwise would have been discarded into making chopsticks, which is not such a bad idea. The yield from one twenty-year-old tree can produce about four-thousand chopsticks. The focus should not be towards ending the disposable chopstick industry but rather should be put towards the factors that do lead to levels of massive deforestation such as agriculture, ranching, commercial logging, and mining industries.

However, because some tens of millions of trees need to be cut down every year for the industry to function, this does help towards this world's deforestation problems when the trees are taken from inappropriate locations. Hundreds of millions of hectares of land have been deforested in the last 30 years, and the industry does add to the damage. When trees are cut down at a gross rate, it causes massive devastating environmental shifts as outcomes. Many factors are outcomes of cutting down these trees, such as a loss of wood as a major resource, erosion of fertile soil, alterations in climate, and an increased potential for massive landslides and severe flooding. To continue using forest resources in an unregulated unsustainable way would be a highly irresponsible thing to do.

Chopsticks should not be banned from the use of the public, for they help cut down transmission rates of malice diseases and have the potential to help clean up the forests that need human intervention. However, just like any other company, when the resources and materials that are needed for the industry function are exhausted or depleted, it will cause many harmful effects on many ecosystems. Nobody has the right to cut out the democratic right of free enterprise. As well as cutting out the right to choose whatever one pleases to eat with. Humans are people of habit, and chopsticks have been a loyal friend for many years, for that reason they should be here to stay.

Sencer. “Would You Support a Ban on Disposable Chopsticks?” *KQED Education*, 27 Dec. 2018, https://ww2.kqed.org/education/2017/05/10/would-you-support-a-ban-on-disposable-chopsticks/.