



Maryland Green Registry MEMBER

The Maryland Green Registry promotes and recognizes sustainable practices at organizations of all types and sizes. Members agree to share at least five environmental practices and one measurable result while striving to continually improve their environmental performance.

Mother's Cantina and Taco Shop



Two locations:
2810 Philadelphia Ave. and
7810 Coastal Hwy.
Ocean City, MD 21842
443-481-7285

www.motherscantina.com

Restaurant

Member since April 2017

Management and Leadership

Environmental Policy Statement

Mother's Cantina and Tortilla Shop is a product of the organic growth of our family's love of food and cooking international cuisine, and our commitment to the environment and our local community. We love what we do, and the dollars we earn are recycled back into our local vendors, including farms, artisans, service providers, and anglers.

Our focus on sourcing locally, reducing food miles, reducing our environmental footprint, is the cornerstone of what we do. We are committed to our environment not only through our food choices, but also through our effort to reduce our impact on the waste stream by eliminating all styrofoam, plastics, non-compostable paper products, and by recycling and composting. By relying on evolving technology and increasingly environmentally friendly products and services, we are making constant progress towards our goals.

Our commitment to the environment is demonstrated by our compliance with current environmental regulations and the implementation of beneficial business practices that affect customers, staff, and community.

Environmental Team

Our team at Mother's Cantina is husband and wife, Ryan and Neely James. Our commitment to the environment and our community permeates both our family and business life, and our efforts are constant and passionate. We meet to go over changes and improvements on the first Tuesday of every month, where we pinpoint potential cost savings, environmental impact, and the ability of our business and family to set an example for the community. For example, we are constantly reducing waste, as it has a very clear impact on trash volume and litter on our local beaches. Our current effort is to increase our contribution to the Go Green Ocean City composting program.

Annual Environmental Goals

Our goals this year are to explore clean energy for our restaurants through solar or wind. We are having both locations surveyed now.

We are also continually working towards sourcing locally. One of our few non-locally sourced ingredients is shrimp. We are currently in negotiations to bring in shrimp from a local boat that travels between Ocean City and North Carolina. While our food cost will increase 18 cents per shrimp, we are excited to have an opportunity to decrease our environmental footprint by reducing the energy it takes to get our ingredients into the kitchen. Additionally, because we will have a fresh, non-frozen product, we will reduce energy and water needed to freeze and thaw.

Environmentally Preferable Products and Services

Mother's Cantina and Taco Shop has reduced its environmental impact through our commitment to the environment and our local community. Our focus on local food, reducing food miles, and getting closer to our food sources is the cornerstone of what we do. Every menu item is made from scratch and prepared daily, and sourced as locally as possible. Reducing food miles causes less stress on our roads, reduced fuel usage, and limits potentially damaging chemical usage on foods that would have to be artificially preserved if purchased from distant vendors. Our food and beverage vendors include local companies: Becky's Beans, Terrapin Farms, Capt. Kerry's Seaborn, Skillagalee Seafood, Cole Farms, Cosmic Spice, Purdue (for whole chickens purchased locally and butchered in house to reduce production energy/waste), Burley Oak Brewery, EVO, Backshore Brewing Co, Wagner and Sysco for a "green line" of products including our compostable carryout containers and bags.

Also, while the closest fresh tortilla product used to be delivered to the shore from Baltimore, Mother's Cantina and Taco Shop is not only preparing and packaging preservative-free tortillas in house, we are also packaging them in recyclable, non-toxic tubing for distribution and sale. Mother's Taco Shop is licensed with the USDA for packaging and distribution of our flour tortillas and wraps and because the product will be available to all stores restaurants on the Eastern Shore from our local distribution center, it will reduce food miles for our peers in the local food industry providing them with a more environmentally conscious product.



Environmentally Preferable Purchasing

As mentioned above, Mother's Cantina and Taco Shop chooses to work with local food vendors, and we also choose to work with local service providers including J Dog Junk Removal, Blazers Sheet Metal, ESS, Essential Systems Solutions, 5 Star plumbing, Celtic Nations, Noovis (internet), Moloney Telecom, and independent local contractors. We support local artisans including Marc Emond of Stinky Beach Studios who provided a full building art installation at our new 78th Street location, Kathy Denk for mural signage, and Sun Signs for produced signage. We value reinvigorating our local community with our spending power, as that in turn empowers them to make better choices in their own business practices. We encourage all of our product and service providers to re-use their packaging by refusing to accept non-reusable methods of packaging and delivery. We also require paperless financial transactions from our providers, reducing waste of time and paper product.

As mentioned above, we have also switched all of our carryout products to recyclable and compostable materials including brown bags and compostable straws, containers, and flatware provided by Lankford Sysco and Wagner.



Environmental Restoration or Community Environmental Projects

Mother's Cantina and Taco Shop is involved in environmental initiatives in our local community. We participate in the [Oyster Recovery Partnership](#) and have become a Maryland Department of Agriculture certified [True Blue](#) restaurant by committing to only serve local Maryland crab.

Since 2019, we have been actively lobbying for conservationist legislation, including the styrofoam ban and plastic bag ban. We have joined 4Ocean and Surfrider Foundation as key speakers in rallies pertaining to both of these bills.

Additionally, as active members of the Chamber of Commerce and the [Adopt Your Beach](#) program, where we have committed ourselves and our staff to clean our beaches in Ocean City, Maryland at least six times a year.

Waste

Solid Waste Reduction and Reuse

Our two restaurant locations have remained largely paperless by refusing to accept or provide paper information (all of our business information is available in electronic form), using handheld ordering systems instead of written paper orders, maintaining a policy of only providing electronic transactions with customers and vendors (all payments and invoices received must be electronic), and increasingly using technology for all business and personal communications vs. paper products.

We also keep oyster shells out of the landfill by collecting them for the Oyster Recovery Partnership, which cleans them, treats them with oyster larvae and returns oyster reefs in the Chesapeake Bay.

Recycling

All cooking oil waste is recycled by an independent BioFuel provider. All glass is recycled by an independently contracted recycling company, J Dog Junk Removal, and we direct cigarette waste to the Town of Ocean City and Maryland Coastal Bays [cigarette butt recycling program](#).

Composting

Food waste is composted at the rate of approximately 60lbs per day! While not all used within the restaurant (much is used for our James Family organic home gardens which also supply Mother's Cantina and Tortilla Shop with fruits, vegetables, and herbs), some composted soil is used for our hanging herb and tomato plants on the east wall of our exterior restaurant fence. In 2021, we will be composting in conjunction with four other local restaurants with the help of conservation group Go Green OC.

Hazardous Waste/Toxic Use Reduction

Hazardous and toxic waste have been almost eliminated from the Mother's Cantina and Taco Shop business. We use all Melaleuca brand cleaners and house blended disinfectants (composed of vinegar water and natural oil fragrance). For heavy disinfectant for kitchen use, we do use bleach, which is diluted during disposal to the point of having little environmental impact. Potentially damaging oil waste is 100% recycled into BioFuel.

Energy

Energy Efficiency

Mother's Cantina and Taco Shop has completely converted to all LED lighting. We have also become increasingly efficient by reducing the flow of traffic into and out of our walk-in refrigerators by simply reconfiguring workflow patterns. We have also reduced frozen items to the point of almost never having to enter a freezer, which greatly reduces energy needed to cool our boxes.

Renewable Energy

We have purchased renewable wind energy to supplement our current energy sources through Delmarva Power. Our hope is to bring our landlord on board to install solar panels on our expansive roof at 28th street plaza. We are currently exploring the viability of solar panels on our 78th street location. Because of a new 3-ft setback rule on panels within city limits, we may be limited in our solar installation. If we are unable to install solar, we will explore moving forward with wind energy.

Transportation

Employee Commute

We have very few employees who commute. We often offer carpools with employees, and often bring at least one to two of our employees to work and home daily. Additionally, approximately 70% of our staff either walk or bike to work. Another 10-15% regularly ride the bus to and from work.

We do have daily commute needs between restaurants, but as the restaurants are only 2.9 miles from each other, our weekly commute total is limited to under 35 miles.

Efficient Business Travel

All of our interviews take place via Zoom interview. We very rarely travel for business. Delivery of goods will use already established USPS routes.

Efficient Fleet Vehicles

In 2021, we switched our personal transportation to an electric car.

Water

Water Conservation

Mother's Cantina has outfitted all faucets with low flow spouts, and we have also installed all water efficient toilets. We also have a highly capable service through Sysco that guarantees our dishwashing equipment is well maintained, efficient, and free from waste and from plumbing leaks.

Stormwater Management and Site Design

In 2014, 28th Street Plaza, at our request, was resurfaced to eliminate low elevation pooling of water and runoff from trash receptacles. Additionally, our breezeway elevation within 28th Street Plaza was raised approximately one foot to eliminate pooling of water within walkways.

In addition, Mother's Cantina and Taco Shop re-laid all of our exterior draining plumbing, bringing the incidence of leaching into groundwater/soil to almost zero. All exterior plumbing was replaced with the assistance of our landlord Bruce Moore in December 2016, and now exceeds current plumbing code.

Environmental Certification Programs, Awards, and Other Activities



Mother's Cantina and Taco Shop has been designated by the Surfrider Foundation as Ocean City's first [Ocean Friendly Restaurant](https://www.surfrider.org/coastal-blog/entry/ocean-friendly-restaurant-spotlight-mothers-cantina-in-ocean-city-maryland). Read more here: <https://www.surfrider.org/coastal-blog/entry/ocean-friendly-restaurant-spotlight-mothers-cantina-in-ocean-city-maryland>

The restaurant also participates in the [Oyster Recovery Partnership](#) and has become a Maryland Department of Natural Resources certified [True Blue](#) restaurant by committing to only serve local Maryland crabs.

Mother's Cantina and Taco Shop has also been recognized with a Governor's Volunteer Service Certificate for our efforts to keep our local beaches clean.

Ryan and Neely James were awarded the 2019 Theodore Roosevelt award by the Maryland League of Conservationist Voters.

<https://www.marylandconservation.org/environmental-awards>

Profile Updated March 2021



Help build a greener, more sustainable Maryland through voluntary practices that reduce environmental impacts and save money.

Learn more at green.maryland.gov

