

RE: CleanBC Plastics Action Plan Public Input

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To: The British Columbia Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy (plastics@gov.bc.ca)

From: A group of Coquitlam secondary school students (info@gleneaglegreen.team)

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Bans on Single-Use Items

- Municipalities should have the ability to work with their communities to ban single-use packaging as they see fit, without first requiring approval from the Ministry of Environment.
- Work with the federal government to ban the terms “biodegradable plastic” and “compostable plastic” for materials that cannot be accepted at most composting facilities.
- Ban the following items
 - Coloured expanded polystyrene foam (including foam egg cartons with printed ink)
 - Expanded polystyrene foam food and beverage containers
 - Plastic six-pack rings for beverage containers
 - Plastic stir sticks
 - Plastic cotton buds
 - PVC packaging (such as bags for pillows)
 - Oxo-degradable plastics
 - Plastic confetti and glitter
 - Balloons filled with helium
 - Plastic produce stickers

Recycling More Plastics

- Add 'packaging-like products' and 'single-use plastics' as obligated products to the Recycling Regulation.
- Commercial waste haulers must report the quantity of recyclables collected and the end destination of these materials (recycle, downcycle, disposal) to the Ministry of Environment
- Add a mandatory EPR program for agricultural plastics. Cleanfarms (a voluntary EPR program) already exists in this province, but has a smaller list here, compared to other provinces which categorize it as a mandatory program for producers.
- Recycling collected from residential properties by a private company should still fall under Recycle BC's mandate.
- Explore the feasibility of adding plastic products to curbside collection (toothbrushes, binders, ink cartridges, water filters, etc.)
- Explore diversion possibilities for medical plastics.
- Work to create more recycling depots at retail locations for packaging not accepted at curbside (such as plastic bags).
- Mandate recycled content minimums for all garbage bags, creating new markets for plastic recyclers.
- Transition to packaging and printed paper extended producer responsibility for institutions. Conduct further consultation to determine whether this should be expanded to also include commercial and industrial facilities.
- Work with Recycle BC to increase diversion rates for flexible plastics, exploring further return to retail options.
- Provide financial support to regional governments exploring mechanical waste treatment as a method to sort out recyclable materials from material sent to a transfer station for garbage disposal, further enhancing plastic recovery.
- Add an extended producer responsibility category for furniture. Couches and mattresses both contain large amounts of foam. This would also include rigid plastic items (baby toys, lawn chairs, suitcases).
- Add an extended producer responsibility category for sports equipment. The outer shell from helmets and foam from pads are two examples of recyclable plastics.
- Provide funding to local companies looking into ways of recycling mixed-material textiles.
- Place a ten-cent deposit on all cigarettes containing plastic filters.
- Add phone cases to the CellRecycle EPR program.

Expanding Plastic Bottle and Beverage Container Returns

- Lift the requirement for recycling depots to provide cash refunds to customers. This will enable small-format depots to be present in urban areas.
- Change the bottle deposit to ten cents for all single-use beverage containers.
- Shift Encorp Pacific's mandate to include milk (dairy and plant) containers, paper beverage cups and plastic beverage cups.
- Ensure that all materials are recovered from cartons (including plastic and foil layers).
- Mandate that at least one depot (standalone or retail) in cities with public transit is easily accessible using the transit network.
- Have an online portal for businesses to request a large volume pickup of containers which fall under the Encorp Pacific system.

Reducing Plastics Overall

- Add a minimum ten cent non-refundable charge for all shopping bags
- Add a minimum recycled content requirement for single-use bags (those made from paper or plastic).
- Make Recycle BC responsible for the municipal cost of garbage pick-up and disposal of packaging that cannot be recycled (such as plastic-lined paper), which fees are collected for.
- Charge additional fees to companies using unrecyclable packaging and give discounts to companies incorporating post-consumer recycled materials into their products.
- Place water bottle refill stations in all provincial buildings and at provincial parks.