

From: [Minister, ENV ENV:EX](#)
To: [Correspondence Unit ENV:EX](#)
Subject: FW: The Missing Millions
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Attachments: ~WRD000.jpg

From: sara@jamies.com [mailto:sara@jamies.com]
Sent: Friday, July 26, 2019 11:15 AM
To: Minister, ENV ENV:EX
Cc: sheila.malcolmson.MLA@leg.bc.ca
Subject: The Missing Millions

Dear Minister Heyman,

As the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy develops strategies for the effective protection and conservation of British Columbia's (BC) water, land, air, and living resources, we want to emphasize the importance of the findings laid out in the recently released report: [British Columbia's Beverage Container Legacy: The Missing Millions](#).

The Ocean Legacy Foundation's (OLF) report shows that in BC alone, **more than one million beverage containers and 2.3 million beverage container caps go missing each day**. These "missing millions" are containers sold to consumers in BC that don't get returned to bottle depots. They are containers that eventually find their way into our environment, including landfills, shorelines, and oceans. If left this way, they cost residents of BC millions of dollars in landfilling and clean up costs. If recycled, they can create millions in economic opportunities.

BC was once a world leader in recycling beverage containers; its approach and regulations are now fifty years old and the results are concerning. With immediate regulatory updates, BC has the opportunity to reclaim its position as an environmental leader, diverting single-use plastics from both waterways and landfills while creating economic and social gains for its citizens.

We strongly support policy changes to our province's deposit refund system and call on the Government of British Columbia to take action on OLF's five recommendations:

Increase the regulated deposit rate

Increase our minimum regulated deposit rate from five cents, a rate set in 1970 and out of touch with current economic incentives, to further encourage people to return their beverage containers to designated depots.

Add all beverage containers to the deposit refund system

- Add all types of containers, such as milk, milk substitutes, drinkable meal replacements, and non-beverage dairy product containers (e.g., cream), to the deposit refund system. Many of these containers are consumed 'on the go' and need a value to encourage consumers to return them for recycling. Collecting and recycling all beverage containers reduces consumer confusion and improves

container return rates.

Require producers to collect and report on the recycling of bottle caps

- Encourage consumers to leave caps on their containers to reduce littering and ensure this material can be recycled.
- Require beverage container producers to collect beverage container caps and report on how many are collected for recycling versus continue to go missing.

Raise regulated minimum targets to at least that achieved by Alberta and Saskatchewan, with long-term targets matching the European Union

- Increase BC's minimum return rate target to 85% and enforce the target on all container sub-categories listed in the regulation.
- Increase BC's minimum return rate target to 90% by 2025 and enforce the target on all container sub-categories listed in the regulation.

Enforce regulated targets in a meaningful way, such as requiring producers to pay for the clean-up of ocean plastics equal to the amount by weight that they fail to collect and recycle

- Ensure compliance with strict enforcement measures.

These recommendations follow proven policy tools in similar regulatory jurisdictions that are available to BC and support positive environmental, economic, and social outcomes. An effective regulated beverage container deposit refund system:

- Helps ensure that beverage containers stay off our shorelines and out of our oceans and other waterways.
- Helps to reduce municipal taxes by reducing the need for waste management services, landfill space, and litter clean up.
- Reduces greenhouse gas production by recycling materials, rather than creating new plastics.
- Provides a stream of funding for people and organizations who collect and return beverage containers to designated depots for the refund.
- Creates up to 38 times more jobs than a curbside recycling system for beverage containers.

We are pleased to see BC sitting up and taking notice of the devastating impact of plastics in our environment. We support the appointment of Sheila Malcolmson, MLA for Nanaimo, as minister's special advisor on marine debris protection. We also urge

BC to move beyond recommendations to curb the disposal of plastics and take immediate action where it will make a difference. An effective deposit refund system will help turn our “missing millions” in beverage containers into millions in economic returns for this province. The time for action is now.

We would appreciate a response that outlines how the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy will take action on *The Missing Millions* recommendations to modernize BC’s regulated beverage container deposit refund system and combat plastic pollution.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best regards,

Sara McArthur

Operations & Safety Coordinator

Jamie's Whaling Station & Adventure Centres

Toll Free: 1.800.667.9913

Tel: 250.725.3919

Fax: 250.725.2138

Tofino & Ucluelet, BC

www.jamies.com

