



THE UNIVERSITY
WOMEN'S CLUB
of VANCOUVER
at H Y C R O F T

September 9, 2019.

The Honorable George Heyman
Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy
Recycling Regulation Amendments
PO Box 9341 Stn. Prov. Govt.
Victoria, BC
V8W 9M1

**RE: ATTACHED LETTER OF RESPONSE TO THE PLASTICS ACTION PLAN FROM THE ENVIRONMENT
COMMITTEE, UNIVERSITY WOMEN'S CLUB OF VANCOUVER**

I am writing with regard to the attached letter from the Environment Committee of the University Women's Club of Vancouver (UWCV) that is in response to your invitation for feedback concerning the new policy opportunities and proposed amendments to the *Recycling Regulations of the Environment Management Act*.

I wish to add my congratulations, to that of the Committee's, on the Ministry bringing forward the **Plastics Action Plan** and for undertaking a collaborative process.

The UWCV supports, in principle, the Environment Committee's feedback and looks forward to a revised version of the **Plastics Action Plan** and your continued transparency regarding this initiative.

Sincerely,

Maureen Kling,
President

Cc: Christine Pinteau,
Chair, Environment Committee



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RE: RESPONSE TO THE PLASTICS ACTION PLAN

I am writing on behalf of the Environment Committee of the University Women's Club of Vancouver (UWCV) in response to your invitation for feedback regarding the new policy opportunities and proposed amendments to the Recycling Regulations of the *Environment Management Act*.

First, the Committee would like to offer our congratulations on bringing forward the **Plastics Action Plan** and for undertaking a collaborative process. We believe that time is of the essence, and it is crucial that all levels of government, philosophically and financially, support such a critical and vital initiative as this. In addition, we believe that the *Canada-wide Strategy and Action Plan on Zero Waste*, be looked at as a two-part initiative, including short and long-term goals comprised of several requirements in each area.

Briefly put, short-term goals would take effect no later than 2021 and would include a ban on single-use packaging including plastic films, bags, wraps or pouches. Other single-use plastics such as plastic cotton swabs, cutlery, plates, straws, drink stirrers, sticks for balloons, as well as all cups, food and beverage containers made of polystyrene foam and all products made from oxo-degradable plastics would also be banned. (Additional details follow below in item # 1.)

Long-term goals would be set with a deadline for 2025 and include a ban on the use of all plastics products except those made from recycled goods. As well, continued public education initiatives to clarify new bans and research support and funding to find plant-based substitutes for plastic products would continue.

The final version of the **Plastics Action Plan** should emphasize the need for clear legislation at the municipal, provincial, and federal levels to eliminate any inefficiencies in addressing specific environmental concerns, and issues and needs, as they may arise in any particular jurisdiction. Additionally, and critical to the success of the Plan, is the efficient development of appropriate environmentally friendly and cost-effective products, affordable to all income levels, especially those in the lower-income bracket.



Following is our feedback regarding the four (4) areas as identified in the **Plastics Action Plan**.

1. BANS ON SINGLE-USE PACKAGING.

- a. We support a ban on single-use packaging, including plastic bags, films, pouches, wraps and containers. Other single-use plastics such as plastic cotton swabs, cutlery, plates, straws, drink stirrers, sticks for balloons, cups, food and beverage containers made of polystyrene foam and all products made from oxo-degradable plastics, would also be banned by 2021.
- b. At the same time, a national and provincial public education campaign should be developed, implemented, and supported financially by all levels of government.
- c. Additionally, funding should be provided for the research of plant-based products to replace single-use plastics and for the development of international partnerships that would build on existing research in this area.
- d. Finally, financial incentives should be made available to companies and businesses that are involved in such research initiatives. The aim would be to phase out single-use products while actively engaging all employees and production facilities in more environmentally supportive practices.

2. MORE RECYCLING OPTIONS.

- a. As stated in # 1 above, we support a ban on plastic packaging. Exemptions, in the short-term only, should be extended to health and safety areas.
- b. A phased-in approach of the use of new biodegradable packaging for these areas should be completed no later than 2025.
- c. Firm deadlines should be established in implementing these new bans. Educational and financial support would need to be made available to provinces and municipalities that would work within their jurisdictions to develop and enforce laws and initiatives.
- d. All efforts should be made to increase Extended Producer Responsibility programs and to include more plastic products in these domains. All single-use plastics should be included in the Recycling Regulation to eliminate any confusion among producers and consumers.

3. EXPANDING PLASTIC BOTTLE AND BEVERAGE CONTAINER RETURNS.

- a. We believe that dairy products should not be excluded from the ban on plastics and producers should be required to use biodegradable packaging by the year 2021.
- b. As well, we suggest that the Ministry implement a uniform fifteen cent deposit-refund policy for all beverage containers.
- c. The Ministry's proposal to permit electronic refunds on beverage containers is a sound idea, provided that no new plastic bags are required.

4. REDUCING PLASTICS OVERALL.

We believe that BC should consider the following in the development of a national standard on recycling content and any associate targets.

- a. In the short-term, increasing the range and availability of recycling is essential and as stated above, requires education, research, and financial support.
- b. We can look to other countries where recycling, reusing and repurposing of plastics and other garbage products are a requirement.



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- c. Research and the forming of international partnerships are vital components of creating a **Plastics Action Plan**, as this is not only a provincial or federal issue but a global one.
- d. Research and the development of plant-based products that would replace single-use plastics must take place concurrently.

In closing, I would like to, once again, thank you for this opportunity to provide our feedback on the **Plastic Action Plan**. However, this is only one part of the more significant and most critical issue of Climate Change that requires immediate attention. The Province of British Columbia and Canada have the opportunity to be strong world leaders in the fight against plastic waste and to be good stewards of our planet if we have the courage to step forward and implement these proactive measures.

We look forward to your continued transparency regarding this initiative and await updates and progress reports.

We will be extending a formal invitation to you shortly, with the sincere hope that you will be able to engage with us on the **Plastics Action Plan** and to discuss how the Environment Committee might work with the government to foster and promote different initiatives.

Sincerely,

Christine Pinteau,
Chair, Environment Committee

Cc: Maureen Kling
President, UWCV