



WEST KOOTENAY

EcoSociety

Director, Citizen Engagement
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RE: Plastics Action Plan

To whom it may concern,

The use of plastics releases at least 100 million tons, and maybe as much as 500 million tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere each year. That's the equivalent of the annual emissions from 10 to 45 percent of U.S. drivers. Increasing the amount that we recycle can help this, but eliminating single-use plastic is the best option for several reasons.

First, fracking for shale gas in the US is fuelling a boom in plastic production. This pollutes ground water and contributes to climate change in two ways. The process of turning oil into 1 gram of plastic releases between 1 and 5 grams of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere which also fuels climate change. Then, when plastic degrades, it releases substantial GHG emissions again.

Second, producing plastics requires a lot of freshwater. One proposed \$18 billion plastic plant in Texas would require more freshwater (7.3 billion gallons) than the entire region's residents use per year (7.1 billion gallons). Also, with an investment of \$18 billion, you can rest assured that this plant will lead to a lot of profit for these companies that will only give them more power to lobby for looser regulations in the future. This would enable this essentially wasteful and destructive industry to further flourish.

With a single use plastics ban, we can stop being a quiet enabler of this wasteful and destructive industry rather than slowly letting more plastic trash and its associated emissions increase as a result of consumption here in BC.

In the fight against climate change, tackling problems like this requires government action, and BC can play a leading role here by banning single use plastics. Without regulations to limit the amount of plastic waste coming into the province, plants like the one proposed in Texas will keep popping up. This would be very problematic, since shutting down profitable businesses quickly becomes a complex problem, even if the business is a truly toxic hazard to humanity. The better option is to prevent this industry from growing, and helping it gradually decline.

Without a ban, we are silently supporting the expansion of this destructive industry. By banning single use plastics, we can join other global jurisdictions in signalling that the blight of destructive and wasteful industries are not what we want for our communities now or in the future.

The oil industry in the US is planning to triple plastic production by 2030. We must not be complicit in the growth of an industry that is by design wasteful and destructive to its core. Without a ban on single use plastics, we will be complicit, and we will be working against mandates in CleanBC as well our national commitments made at COP 2015 to limit global warming to below 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Recycling more is important. We recycle a woefully low percentage of the plastics that are produced. However, recycling technology is still in development, which is why only certain numbered plastics

are recycled in most places, so we have an incomplete recycling system that allows for a lot of plastic to escape the recycling system, in the form of waste.

Increasing recycling efforts is important. However, a single use plastic ban would be the best initiative that BC could undertake. By banning single use plastics, British Columbia can reduce its contribution to climate change and the degradation of the dwindling freshwater supply that we as humans rely on.

Yours truly,

Matt Murray
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