

Media Release

Provincial Waste Reduction Organizations Support Plans to Reduce Plastic Waste and Urge Prompt Action

June 13, 2019

Canada's provincial waste reduction and recycling organizations (Recycling Council of BC, Recycling Council of Alberta, Saskatchewan Waste Reduction Council and Recycling Council of Ontario) support the Government of Canada's announcement regarding plans to reduce Canada's plastic waste, support innovation, and promote the use of affordable and safe alternatives.

Specifically, we agree with initiatives to ban single-use plastics (such as plastic bags, straws, cutlery, plates, and stir sticks) as early as 2021. We keenly await further details on what materials will be included and how these bans will be introduced and enforced. We note that this approach seems to mirror the approach taken by the EU in its Single-Use Plastics Directive.

We are pleased to see that these initiatives will be supported by scientific evidence. This provides an opportunity to work towards a circular economy model through research regarding best practices and innovation. At the same time, we want to ensure that this is not used as an excuse to delay necessary action. The elimination of unnecessary single-use plastics is well grounded in reality, and should be advanced as soon as possible.

We urge the government to also adopt approaches similar to the EU's in setting design requirements and aggressive diversion targets for remaining plastics. This is consistent with the stated approach to work with provinces and territories to introduce standards and targets for companies that manufacture plastic products or sell items with plastic packaging so they become responsible for their plastic waste. Current EPR policies and programs across Canada have different scopes, financial models, performance definitions, and approaches to enforcement and compliance. The introduction of national standards could be the catalyst to create harmonized frameworks, facilitate consistent data collection, and set national targets for plastics waste recycling.

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The Government of Canada's Press Release can be found at <https://pm.gc.ca/eng/news/2019/06/10/canada-ban-harmful-single-use-plastics-and-hold-companies-responsible-plastic-waste>