

November 7th, 2017

Gord Johns, MP
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A1

Dear Mr. Johns:

Re: Support for Private Members motion M-151

West Coast Environmental Law Association (WCELA) is dedicated to safeguarding the environment through law. Since 1974 our staff lawyers have successfully worked with many parties, including all levels of government, to develop proactive legal solutions to protect and sustain the environment. Our marine program seeks to strengthen legal frameworks for ocean conservation.

West Coast Environmental Law strongly supports the motion you brought before the House of Commons on November 1st 2017 to develop a national strategy to combat plastic pollution in and around aquatic environments.

There is rapidly developing realisation of the pervasiveness and persistence of marine debris and its impacts to marine ecosystems.¹ Large debris items are readily visible and their impacts, including wildlife entanglement and accumulation on coastlines, are well known. Increasingly, the widespread distribution and effect of micro-plastics in the marine environment are becoming apparent, including the ability to be transferred throughout marine foodwebs.

The diverse sources of pollution and connectivity of marine environments require coordinated, multi-level action. A number of legal tools exist to support regulatory measures addressing marine plastic pollution through prevention and mitigation measures.² We would be pleased to work with you to develop appropriate tools to use in Canada to combat this problem.

In September 2017 the Canadian government joined the UN Environment's CleanSeas campaign, which aspires to eliminate major sources of marine litter by 2022. The national collaborative efforts proposed in this motion are needed to coordinate and achieve these international commitments.

Sincerely,



Linda Nowlan, Staff Counsel & Marine Program Lead

Maryann Watson, Marine Campaigner

¹ See for example, Worm, B. et al. 2017. Plastic and a Persistent Marine Pollutant. Annual Review of Environment and Resources, 42:1-26. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-environ-102016-060700>

² United Nations Environment Programme. 2016. Marine Litter Legislation: A Toolkit for Policymakers. University of Victoria Environmental Law Centre. 2017. Seven Reforms to Address Marine Plastic Pollution.