

plasticpollutioncoalition

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Dear MP Gord Johns,

In just the last few decades, people have come to expect plastic straws, plastic lids, and stirrers in every drink, along with plastic cutlery and condiment packets in every “to-go” order. Whether picnicking or bringing it home, this indiscriminate distribution of single-use plastic is an example of extreme waste generated for minimal convenience. These “tools” and plastic packaging are quickly dropped into waste bins without further thought, instantly becoming a growing source of plastic pollution.

The continued use of this unnecessary, disposable plastic perpetuates our dependence on fossil fuels and exacerbates climate change, as nearly all single-use plastic straws, stirrers, lids and cutlery are made from petroleum. Addressing source reduction of single-use plastic foodware is a positive, cost-saving and attainable first step. As Canada strives to promote sustainability in so many of its municipal waste management systems, true fossil fuel divestment requires eliminating our reliance on single-use plastics. Plastic never was and never will be disposable.

We're in the middle of a global plastic pollution crisis, with plastic production slated to increase by 40% in the next decade. The amount that we're creating is neither sustainable, nor compatible with life on this planet. Given our existing infrastructure and the [closed door from China](#), U.S. plastic recycling rates are projected to drop from 4.4% in 2018 to 2.9% in 2019. We do not estimate that recycling rates will be much better worldwide. As this un-recycled plastic ends up in our oceans, it creates a toxic environment for humans and marine animals alike. Plastic pieces float along the ocean's surface and throughout the water column; it has even been found in the Mariana Trench, the deepest point of the ocean floor. If business continues as usual, experts predict that by 2050, [our oceans will contain more plastic than fish](#) (by weight). Microplastics are being ingested by the entire marine food chain. We also know that the chemicals used in plastic correlate to the alarming global increase in obesity, diabetes and cancer rates.

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We caution that allowing bio- and compostable plastics into the waste stream is not a viable alternative. These items [do not naturally degrade](#) and threaten the health of our soil and aquatic environments. Furthermore, these materials cause confusion among consumers and lead to cross-contamination in our recycling streams. Incineration of plastic is also not a solution. The process of incineration merely transforms plastic waste into other forms of waste, such as toxic ash and air and water pollution, which are harder to contain and usually more toxic than the original plastic waste.

Plastic Pollution Coalition envisions a world free of plastic pollution, where:

- Individuals and systems embody zero-waste values of reusability and durability so plastic pollution is reduced at the source: in use and production.
- Packaging and goods are intentionally designed to be useful throughout their existence.
- The industry actively takes extended responsibility for all products and packaging throughout their lifetime, from cradle to cradle.
- Governments, industry, and NGOs work collaboratively to create and sustain a circular system, eliminating the concept of "waste" by designing an ongoing use and positive outcome for every product and byproduct.

We fully support and stand behind M151- national strategy to combat plastic pollution.

“The health of our waters is the principle measure of how we live on the land.”

– Luna Leopold

In providing upstream solutions to plastic pollution, Canadians are stewards of their land, while insuring protection to the various other flora and fauna of their waters and coastline.

It is time to make the health of our communities, our environment, and our climate top priority. These positive actions will help lead the world to meet our ambitious climate goals and will be a model for other countries to follow suit. The time is now. The place is Canada.

Thank you,



Dianna Cohen, CEO, Plastic Pollution Coalition



Jackie Nuñez, Program Director, The Last Plastic Straw

