

Media Kit: NDP National Strategy to Combat Plastic Pollution

Issue

Oceans plastics are a mounting global concern. Each year more than 20 million tons of debris enters the world's oceans and around the world plastic is having a devastating impact on marine environments, ecosystems and human health. If left unchecked it is predicted that by 2050 the mass of plastic in our oceans will outweigh that of fish.

Single-use plastics are a part of everyday life and around eighty percent of all plastic in the ocean comes from land-based sources. Ninety-five percent of single-use plastics, such as coffee lids, plastic bags, and plastic drinking straws are used once and discarded.

Marine plastic debris is a growing threat to oceans, marine life, and human health. Ocean plastics impact the ocean and coastal ecological web, threatening fisheries and the livelihoods of the over 72,000 Canadians who make their living from fishing and fishing-related activities. Plastics are even found in the flesh of supermarket seafood and in sea-salt, affecting the safety of our food supply.

Even though Canada has the world's longest coastline, our country has no national policy to prevent plastics from entering our waters, and no mechanisms to clean-up the pollution that is already there.

There is a complete regulatory and legislative void at the federal level to address plastic pollution, and we are falling behind our global neighbours. Over forty countries, including four of the G7 - France, Italy, Germany, United Kingdom, Kenya, China, and Rwanda - have taken concrete steps to address plastic waste and plastic production.

In April 2018, during the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, UK Prime Minister Theresa May announced a UK plastic reduction strategy which included banning plastic straws and a commitment to prohibiting "avoidable plastics" by 2042. When asked if he would follow the UK's lead, Prime Minister Trudeau made no commitment to developing a national policy.

It is clear that Canadians have a growing concern over ocean plastics. A petition¹ created by SumofUs and The Ocean Legacy Foundation has almost 100,000 signatures to date.

Solutions

On November 1, 2017 MP Gord Johns (Courtenay-Alberni) introduced motion M-151, which calls on the government to develop a national strategy to address ocean plastics. M-151² outlines an effective foundation for Ocean Plastic policy including concrete steps which Canada needs to adopt. Mr. Johns' motion was based on a report from the University of Victoria's Environmental Law

¹ <https://actions.sumofus.org/a/tell-canada-to-support-anti-plastics-bill-m-151>

² <http://gordjohns.ndp.ca/keep-plastics-out-of-our-water>

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Centre³, written by Prof. Calvin Sandborn which details seven reforms necessary for Canada to effectively address the problem of plastic pollution in our waters.

M-151 includes the following:

A) Regulations aimed at reducing;

- (i) plastic debris discharge from stormwater outfalls,
- (ii) industrial use of micro-plastics including, but not limited to, microbeads, nurdles, fibrous microplastics and fragments,
- (iii) consumer and industrial use of single use plastics, including, but not limited to, plastic bags, bottles, straws, tableware, polystyrene (foam), cigarette filters, and beverage containers; and

(B) Permanent, dedicated, and annual funding for the;

- (i) cleanup of derelict fishing gear,
- (ii) community-led projects to clean up plastics and debris on shores, banks, beaches and other aquatic peripheries,
- (iii) education and outreach campaigns on the root causes and negative environmental effects of plastic pollution in and around all bodies of water.

New Democrats are committed to ending the wasteful development of single-use plastics and to preserving oceans and waterways from coast to coast to coast.

In Parliament

MP Gord Johns has risen in the House of Commons on the issue of marine debris/ocean plastics over 25 times.

June 11, 2018 in Question Period - <https://youtu.be/9EeHWF19FcQ>

June 7, 2018 in Question Period - <https://youtu.be/nyG04einoKk>

June 5, 2018 in Question Period - <https://youtu.be/KN420F4j0rM>

May 24, 2018 Statement - https://youtu.be/cn8Y_5kPzHw

May 23, 2018 in Question Period - <https://youtu.be/b5c1ez1OgJ4>

April 25, 2018 in Question Period - https://youtu.be/r_KmcHrmLDY

April 23, 2018 introducing a petition - <https://youtu.be/kEwmO8V5Ilw>

Feb. 28, 2018 debate on plastic bag spill - <https://youtu.be/2AHTYB63Eps>

³ <http://www.elc.uvic.ca/publications/national-marine-plastics-strategy/>

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Feb. 12, 2018 Debate on marine debris - <https://youtu.be/VZ8xV8Hjr4M>

Nov. 22, 2017 in Question Period - https://youtu.be/R_sz7dc3UFU

Nov. 2, 2017 in Question Period - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fOh1aCRxbIU>

Sept. 29, 2017 debate on C-55 - <https://youtu.be/T-5u8kQET-Y>

Sept. 27, 2017: in Question Period - <https://youtu.be/ve8lRz4JdbQ>

June 7, 2017: in Question Period: <https://youtu.be/fHt0HZHyirY>

Gord Johns in the media

<http://www.iheartradio.ca/610cktb/audio/bill-to-keep-plastic-out-of-water-1.3890050?mode=Article&autoplay=1.3890050>

<https://globalnews.ca/video/4259935/ndp-wants-know-when-the-liberal-government-will-take-action-on-banning-single-use-plastics>

<https://globalnews.ca/news/4258579/vancouver-island-mp-leading-push-for-national-strategy-to-phase-out-plastic/>

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/canada-trump-g7-agenda-1.4694728>

<https://nanaimonewsnow.com/article/581282/rdn-efforts-against-ocean-litter-receives-national-support>

<https://www.saanichnews.com/news/vancouver-island-ground-zero-for-ocean-plastics-issue-courtenay-alberni-mp/>

<https://www.cheknews.ca/clayoquot-cleanup-finds-ocean-plastic-deep-in-forest-447853/>

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/article-can-canada-reinvent-the-plastic-economy/>

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/aftermath-of-hanjin-cargo-spill-shows-gaps-in-debris-cleanup-approach-tofino-mayor/article37477557/>

<https://www.cheknews.ca/vancouver-island-mp-calls-for-improved-federal-plan-for-plastics-442071/>

<https://watershedsentinel.ca/articles/oceans-of-plastic/>

<https://www.comoxvalleyrecord.com/news/ndp-invites-trudeau-to-discuss-ocean-plastics/>

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Official photograph



Gord Johns, MP (Courtenay-Alberni)

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