



RESPONSE TO PETITION

Prepare in English and French marking 'Original Text' or 'Translation'

PETITION No.: **421-02642**

BY: **MR. RUIMY (PITT MEADOWS-MAPLE RIDGE)**

DATE: **SEPTEMBER 24, 2018**

PRINT NAME OF SIGNATORY: **THE HONOURABLE CATHERINE MCKENNA**

Response by the Minister of Environment and Climate Change

SIGNATURE

Minister or Parliamentary Secretary

SUBJECT

Environmental Pollution

ORIGINAL TEXT

REPLY

Plastics play an important role in Canadians' lives. Plastics are ubiquitous and have benefits in terms of accessibility, convenience, and energy efficiency, but their mismanagement poses a threat to our livelihoods and ecosystems. Plastic litter and microplastics are a global issue that are also found on all of Canada's coasts and in our major freshwater systems including the Great Lakes. Plastics are on our shorelines, in sediments, waters, sea ice and in wildlife.

The Government of Canada recognizes that plastic waste and plastic pollution are a pressing environmental issue, requiring action by governments, industry, retailers, consumers, researchers, and individuals – including youth. It will also require a shift in emphasis from end-of-life management to treating plastics as a resource.

Due to this complexity, there is no single solution to reduce plastic waste and plastic pollution. The Government of Canada is working with the provinces and territories to develop a comprehensive approach to address this issue. This includes evaluating all available policy options. This means going beyond focusing on a single product type – like straws – and taking concerted action throughout the lifecycle of plastics, from product design to end of life management.

The Government of Canada is already taking action on this issue through pollution prevention legislation; conducting research on the sources, distribution and impacts of plastic litter and microplastics in the aquatic environment and

biota; funding researchers and communities, including shoreline clean-ups and outreach; investing in waste and wastewater infrastructure; and engaging with partners at home and abroad.

For example, Environment and Climate Change Canada published the *Microbeads in Toiletries Regulations* on June 14, 2017. These regulations will phase out the use of plastic microbeads in toiletries in Canada and help keep Canada's lakes and rivers clean by reducing the quantity of microbeads entering Canadian freshwater and marine ecosystems.

Federal, provincial and territorial governments are currently working together through the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment to develop a Canada-wide approach to zero plastic waste. This approach supports the implementation of the Ocean Plastics Charter, championed by Canada under its G7 Presidency and launched at the G7 Leaders' Summit in Charlevoix in June 2018. Nine countries, the European Union, and more than eighteen partner companies and organizations have endorsed the Charter. Our shared goal is to keep all types of plastic in the economy and out of the environment.

This collaborative work seeks solutions throughout the lifecycle of plastics, including:

- making plastic design and production more sustainable;
- improving collection, management systems and infrastructure;
- adopting a more sustainable lifestyle, including through education;
- improving our understanding of the issue and solutions through research and innovation; and finally,
- taking action to remove the plastic litter that is already covering the world's shorelines and waterways.

During the G7 Ministerial meetings in Halifax September 19-21, 2018, Canada continued to demonstrate leadership through commitments to protect lakes, rivers and oceans from plastic pollution. These commitments include \$65 million for plastic waste solutions in developing countries through the World Bank, \$20 million for the G7 Innovation Challenge to address marine plastic litter, and over \$12 million for domestic innovation challenges. Canada also joined the Global Ghost Gear Initiative, and will be investing \$600,000 in the Marine Pollution Monitoring Program. In addition, the Government of Canada committed to diverting at least 75 per cent of the plastic waste from government operations by 2030 by increasing plastic recycling, reducing unnecessary uses of single-use plastic products and promoting the purchase of sustainable plastic products.

Initiatives will continue to evolve as the federal government works with other orders of government, other countries, industry and the public to advance measures aimed at reducing plastic waste and plastic pollution.