



## RESPONSE TO PETITION

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

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PETITION No.: **421-04146**

BY: **MR. MANLY (NANAIMO-LADYSMITH)**

DATE: **JUNE 5, 2019**

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

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Response by the Minister of Environment and Climate Change

SIGNATURE  
Minister or Parliamentary Secretary

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SUBJECT

**Environmental pollution**

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**ORIGINAL TEXT**

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**REPLY**

Plastic pollution is a global challenge that requires immediate action. Less than 9% of Canada's plastic waste is recycled each year; the rest is ending up in landfills, Waste-To-Energy facilities, or littered to the environment. Of particular concern are single use or short-lived plastics, which are limited in their reuse and recyclability and are the most common items found on our shorelines. As demonstrated below, the Government of Canada's approach to addressing plastic pollution is multi-faceted.

Canada championed the Ocean Plastics Charter ([https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/eccc/documents/pdf/pollution-waste/ocean-plastics/Ocean%20Plastics%20Charter\\_EN.pdf](https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/eccc/documents/pdf/pollution-waste/ocean-plastics/Ocean%20Plastics%20Charter_EN.pdf)) under its 2018 G7 presidency. To date, 21 governments and more than 60 businesses and organizations have signed the Charter. Signatories to the Charter commit to move toward a more sustainable approach to producing, using and managing plastics, reducing plastic waste and marine litter. The Charter includes targets to work with industry to achieve 100% reusable, recyclable, or, where viable alternatives do not exist, recoverable plastics by 2030, and increasing recycled content by at least 50% where applicable by 2030. The Government of Canada has contributed \$100 million to support developing countries to manage plastic waste.

In November 2018, federal, provincial and territorial environment ministers agreed to the Canada-wide Strategy on Zero Plastic Waste

(<https://www.ccme.ca/files/Resources/waste/plastics/STRATEGY%20ON%20ZERO%20PLASTIC%20WASTE.pdf>). The Strategy describes the broad actions to take with respect to better product design, the responsible use and recycling of single-use plastics, and the expansion of collection and recycling systems. The first phase of an Action Plan ([https://www.ccme.ca/files/Resources/waste/plastics/1289\\_CCME%20Canada-wide%20Action%20Plan%20on%20Zero%20Plastic%20Waste\\_EN\\_June%2027-19.pdf](https://www.ccme.ca/files/Resources/waste/plastics/1289_CCME%20Canada-wide%20Action%20Plan%20on%20Zero%20Plastic%20Waste_EN_June%2027-19.pdf)) to implement the Canada-wide Strategy was approved by the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME) at their annual meeting in Halifax, Nova Scotia, on June 27, 2019. Phase II of the Action Plan will address the issues of plastic pollution from land and aquatic sources, improving our scientific understanding of plastics in the environment, and expanding the tools available to us to tackle plastic pollution. Phase II will also include actions to empower Canadians to reduce plastic waste in their daily lives, improve their participation in existing recycling programs, and lead or participate in community initiatives. It will be submitted to CCME ministers for approval in summer 2020.

In support of the CCME Strategy, on June 10 the Prime Minister announced (<https://pm.gc.ca/eng/news/2019/06/10/canada-ban-harmful-single-use-plastics-and-hold-companies-responsible-plastic-waste>) that the Government of Canada is taking major steps to reduce plastic waste and pollution. Specifically, it will ban harmful single-use plastics as early as 2021, where supported by scientific evidence and warranted. As part of the process, Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) and Health Canada are undertaking a science assessment of plastic pollution, which will be made available to the public for comment. The Government of Canada will also work with provinces and territories to make producers responsible for plastic waste generated by their products, and take other steps to reduce pollution from plastic products and packaging. Other potential regulatory actions could include establishing product requirements such as recycled content, and improved design that ensures the product can be recycled or repaired. The Government of Canada will also 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.

Federal departments have implemented, or are in the process of implementing, concrete measures to help reduce plastic waste. They are:

- Undertaking the foundational data and analytical work necessary to inform its policies and track Canada's progress and effectiveness on reducing plastic waste over time. In this vein, ECCC commissioned Deloitte to complete an Economic Study of the Canadian Plastic Industry, Markets and Waste ([http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\\_2019/eccc/En4-366-1-2019-eng.pdf](http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2019/eccc/En4-366-1-2019-eng.pdf)) to shed light on the plastics value chain in Canada. The study was published in spring of 2019.
- Developing Canada's Plastics Science Agenda (CaPSA), which identifies opportunities for current and future research that will strengthen the evidence base for decision making. CaPSA's priority areas span the lifecycle of plastics and include detecting plastics in the environment, understanding and mitigating impacts on wildlife and human health and the environment, and advancing sustainable plastic production, recycling, and recovery to help build a circular plastics economy.
- Diverting at least 75% of plastic waste from federal operations by 2030, including the reduction of single-use plastics in meetings and events, and green procurement.

- Committing \$10 million to the Canadian Plastic Innovation Challenges, which support innovative solutions from small and medium Canadian companies to some of the most pressing plastics issues including improving alternatives to conventional single-use plastics and packaging, improving the sorting of plastics for recycling, and removing marine litter from the oceans.
- The Government will support local communities, businesses and individuals to help deploy solutions to reduce plastic pollution, in particular through ghost gear initiatives, to prevent its breakdown into microplastics and reduce impacts on species and ecosystems. This includes community prevention, clean up activities and science monitoring activities.
- Supporting initiatives designed to influence consumer demand, incite responsible behaviour change and improve participation in sound waste management practices. Most recently, the Government of Canada contributed to a joint project by Canadian Geographic, the Recycling Council of Ontario and Strut Creative, which launched the 10 000 Changes (<https://10000changes.ca/en/>) site to help Canadians and businesses understand the problem of plastic pollution and to identify ways to reduce their footprint.

Finally, in 2020 Canada will host the fourth of World Circular Economy Forum (WCEF)

(<https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2019/06/canada-to-host-the-2020-world-circular-economy-forum.html>). The WCEF is an international forum through which business leaders policymakers and experts present the world's best circular economy solutions to help identify and unlock potential solutions to move towards a circular economy. The 2020 WCEF will be a North American premiere, and is set to reach an entirely new audience of producers, consumers and policymakers.

Initiatives will continue to evolve as the Federal Government works with government, industry and non-governmental stakeholders, and the public to advance and implement measures for addressing plastic waste and marine litter in Canada and globally.