



APR 15 2021

On behalf of the Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson, Minister of Environment and Climate Change, I am responding to your email message of December 4, 2020, concerning single-use plastic water bottles. I regret the delay in replying.

Plastic pollution is a global challenge that requires immediate and concerted action. The Government of Canada has adopted a comprehensive approach to meet its target of zero plastic waste by 2030. Important aspects of the federal agenda include investing in research through Canada's Plastics Science Agenda, innovation through the Canadian Plastics Innovation Challenges, and community action through the Zero Plastic Waste Initiative.

The Government of Canada is working in partnership with organizations and industries to develop solutions to reduce waste in the first place, and increase the recovery of waste plastics in the country. In collaboration with provinces and territories, the Government is also working to ensure producers are responsible for the waste their products generate. The aim is to work with all sectors of the economy (packaging, textiles, electronics, construction materials, vehicles and others) in order to keep plastics in the economy and out of the environment. You may follow these actions at www.canada.ca/zero-plastic-waste.

The federal government recently announced further details on its steps to address plastic waste and pollution. As you know, these include the release of a discussion paper outlining a framework for managing plastics, a proposed list of single-use items to be banned or restricted, as well as other measures to increase Canada's ability to recycle and recover plastics. The discussion paper, whose public comment period ended in December 2020, is available at www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/canadian-environmental-protection-act-registry/plastics-proposed-integrated-management-approach.html.

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The discussion paper identified beverage bottles and caps as a category of single-use plastics that is environmentally problematic due to its prevalence in the environment and potential to cause environmental harm. However, plastic water bottles have not been identified for a potential ban or restriction at this time. This is mainly due to their recyclability and high recycling rates. The discussion paper identifies other instruments that may be appropriate for managing the environmental impacts of plastic water bottles such as extended producer responsibility policies and bottle deposit systems, several of which are already in place in some provinces and territories across Canada.

At the same time, the federal government is sensitive to the circumstances brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic and is committed to developing environmental measures in a responsible way that is in step with economic recovery and health protection. Regulatory measures, including which items are good candidates for a ban, will be developed taking into account the impacts of the pandemic and other factors such as accessibility needs. For example, none of the proposed items are considered personal protective equipment. A transition period is also being considered for the items to be banned or their uses restricted. Environment and Climate Change Canada, as well as other federal departments and agencies, will work closely with industry during the regulatory development process.

Public health protection is a top priority for the Government of Canada. The Government recognizes the importance of balancing environmental protection and clean growth with the role of plastics in protecting human health, particularly during this COVID-19 public health emergency.

The Government of Canada believes that actions by individuals, communities and industry can also make a big difference. As such, it has provided funding for innovative solutions by industry and communities to effect change within and across the plastics life cycle to better product design, increase collection, improve value recovery, and prevent plastic pollution.

For example, through the Canadian Plastics Innovation Challenges, the Government of Canada is investing nearly \$19 million to support Canadian innovators and small- and medium-sized businesses across Canada develop new ways to reduce plastic waste and to turn waste into valuable resources. It provides winners with up to \$150 000 to develop a proof of concept, and subsequently up to \$1 million to develop a prototype if selected. The Challenges are part of this country's comprehensive approach to addressing plastic waste and pollution. This program incentivizes the development of technology to

address plastic waste. The Challenges include, among other categories, supporting innovation in reducing plastic waste and microfibers from textiles, finding sustainable alternatives to plastic packaging, developing sustainable fishing and aquaculture gear, and creating innovative solutions to address plastic waste and toxic substances from electronics (www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/101.nsf/eng/00001.html).

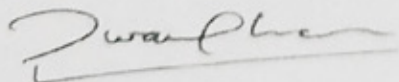
The transition to a more circular economy aims to not only reduce pressure on the environment, but also increase competitiveness, stimulate innovation, and boost economic growth by creating new green jobs. Plastics are a valuable material in the economy and in the lives of Canadians. It is important that the Government of Canada continue its work to reduce the amounts that are being sent to landfills by lessening plastic waste overall, increasing the recovery of plastics, and retaining their economic value.

As well, the federal government is working with provinces and territories through the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment. Together, we have launched the Canada-wide Strategy on Zero Plastic Waste and adopted an action plan that contains collaborative actions by government to help reduce waste, improve the recovery of plastics, and help consumers do their part as well. Details on the Strategy and action plan are available at www.ccme.ca/en/resources/waste/waste/plastic-waste.html.

Regarding the Zero Plastic Waste Initiative, the Government of Canada has invested nearly \$5 million since 2018 in mobilizing actions to raise awareness and improve the understanding, mitigation and remediation of plastic pollution. Specifically, the federal government has invested in building capacity through local projects that test innovative solutions, which will lead to a measurable reduction of plastic pollution in Canada and support a circular economy. To learn more about the latest projects supported by the Government, I invite you to consult www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2020/10/new-projects-funded-by-the-zero-plastic-waste-initiative.html.

Environment and Climate Change Canada appreciates being made aware of your views. Please accept my best regards.

Sincerely,



Iwan Chan
Director General
Corporate Secretariat