

July 19, 2023

The Honorable Steven Guilbeault  
Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada

Dear Minister

We (Ottawa Water Study/Action Group) are writing out of our urgent distress about the on-going production of single use plastics and their catastrophe in our environment and in our world. We applaud the government for banning 6 single use plastic items which are currently being phased out. However, these items account for approximately 5% of the total single use plastic use in Canada.

You have announced that "The Liberal government has set 2030 as the target date for halting the flow of plastic waste that ends up in landfills or as litter on beaches, in rivers, wetlands and forests.". Congratulations - although at this point, we do not see a strategy to achieve this in 6 plus years. The fossil fuel industry still receives government subsidies for the extraction of oil. As the world slowly reduces its use of fossil fuels, the industry is changing its focus and expanding its production of single use plastics. The fossil fuel/plastics industry lobbying is intense but this industry must be held accountable for the environmental degradation here in Canada. It also must be accountable for the disaster in countries to which our waste is shipped, causing enormous environmental and health concerns.

There is an urgent need for Canadian legislation to limit the production of single use plastic, particularly single use plastic water bottles. Equally, there is an urgent need for legislation and regulations to ensure that the industry is accountable for recycling what they produce. We will be watching for legislative developments here in Canada.

As a concrete action step, we at Ottawa Water Study/Action Group want to see the federal government ban the use and sale of plastic water bottles in all federal government buildings.

We congratulate you on Canada's participation in the Global Plastics Treaty. In the face of enormous pressure from the plastic industry, the proponents of this Treaty have pressed on and moved into the draft stage. We urge you to fully commit to the purpose of this Treaty! We look forward to strong, enforceable outcomes in the Treaty draft discussions in November and again in the meetings hosted by Canada in 2024.

Yours sincerely

Ottawa Water Study Action Group  
Owsagottawa.org