

SURFRIDER FOUNDATION CANADA

RESPONSE TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S ANNOUNCEMENT ON PLASTICS



(British Columbia) – On June 10, the federal government of Canada announced their plan to address plastic pollution, in response to increasing pressure from the public and environmental organizations to solve this pollution and the waste management crisis. The goals of this plan are set to be achieved as early as 2021, and may include:

- banning a comprehensive list of single-use plastics
- making manufacturers of plastic products and packaging responsible for recycling these items at the end of their life-cycle through extended producer responsibility (EPR)
- creating a domestic market for recycled plastic
- investing in finding alternatives to plastics for small and medium sized businesses;
- as well as working with industry and businesses to establish innovative solutions for transforming plastic waste into a resource

Current steps being taken by the federal government include researching these goals, facilitating consultations with industry and Canadians, establishing consistent EPR standards for products across Canada, and ensuring that final standards/regulations mirror the actions of the European Union.

Surfrider Foundation Canada support the goals shared in the federal announcement, which include multiple of the recommendations provided in a formal request that was sent to the Minister of Environment and Minister of Health on June 5th, 2019. A total of twelve leading ocean conservancy and environmental groups signed on to this request, including:

1. Surfrider Foundation Canada
2. The Ocean Legacy Foundation
3. Environmental Defence Canada
4. West Coast Environmental Law
5. Friends of the Earth Canada
6. Pacific Wild Alliance
7. BC Marine Trails Association
8. Coastal Restoration Society
9. Sea Shepherd Conservation Society
10. Greenwave Environmental Consulting
11. Sea Legacy
12. Association for Denman Island Marine Stewards

Collectively, the groups requested that Canada's environment and health ministers take immediate regulatory action on plastic wastes and pollution, under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act 1999 (CEPA), and call on the Government of Canada to add any plastic generated as a waste, or discharged from the use or disposal of products or packaging, to the Schedule 1 List of Toxic Substances under CEPA. With this monumental news, the Government of Canada stated that Ottawa will begin a scientific evaluation to designate plastic waste as a toxic substance under CEPA, which is a necessary step in imposing bans and achieving all other goals shared in their announcement.

In December, 2018, Motion-151 was passed unanimously in the House of Commons, which demanded that the government create a national strategy to address plastic pollution. Surfrider Foundation Canada is a proud stakeholder of this Motion, and are elated to see action finally being taken by the federal government to meet the urgent intent of Motion-151.

Surfrider Foundation Canada look forward to the release of more specific details on how the steps to achieve all goals will be put into action. Additionally, we encourage every person in Canada to continue to address plastic pollution by making responsible consumer choices and taking steps to both protect and restore their local environments.