



## PLASTICS – ENHANCING CANADA'S ROLE IN THE STEWARDSHIP AND REDUCTION OF PLASTIC WASTE IN A CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Although Canada has made international investment and commitments to reduce microplastics and marine debris in our Great Lakes,<sup>44</sup> and oceans,<sup>45</sup> it has not matched the efforts of the EU<sup>46</sup> or other jurisdictions through investment in infrastructure, research, extended producer responsibility programs, or modernized waste management programs and policies that support a movement towards a circular economy.<sup>47</sup> Now is the time for a national waste reduction strategy that harmonizes performance standards, measurement protocols, and definitions from coast-to-coast-to-coast.<sup>48</sup> Canada needs to take priority steps to declare single-use plastics, microplastics and microfibres as toxic under the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act (CEPA)*;<sup>49</sup> and move to zero plastic waste by 2025.

The Green Budget Coalition recognizes Canada is in the early stages of this effort and we expect more will be learned over time regarding the scale and detail of the required actions and funding. To accelerate the efforts to create a national plastics and waste strategy, the GBC recommends the Government of Canada provide new **five-year funding of \$86 million per year** to Environment and Climate Change Canada, in collaboration with other federal agencies and other levels of government, with an initial focus on:

- Creating strong, innovative waste management policies and regulations to increase the reuse, recycling and composting of plastics, including extended producer responsibility by the plastics sector; (\$1M/year)
- Investing in research (\$50M/year) to:
  - Create innovative product designs that reduce harmful plastics and eliminate harmful additives to our natural environments, and
  - Increase knowledge and understanding regarding the impacts of plastics on the health of Canadians, and on the natural environments on which we depend; and
- Investing in a circular economy through modernized infrastructure for waste diversion (\$35M/year, conditional on provincial and territorial match), while ending subsidies to plastic manufacturers.<sup>50</sup>

### Contact

Rebecca Brushett  
Marine Campaign Coordinator  
Ecology Action Centre  
rbrushett@ecologyaction.ca

44. Microplastics in the Great Lakes Workshop Report, Final Report, September 2016, [http://www.ijc.org/files/tiny/mce/uploaded/Microplastics\\_in\\_the\\_Great\\_Lakes\\_Workshop\\_Report\\_FINAL\\_September14-2016.pdf](http://www.ijc.org/files/tiny/mce/uploaded/Microplastics_in_the_Great_Lakes_Workshop_Report_FINAL_September14-2016.pdf)

45. Working together on climate change, oceans, and clean energy. <https://pm.gc.ca/eng/news/2018/06/10/working-together-climate-change-oceans-and-clean-energy>

46. [https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/new-proposal-will-tackle-marine-litter-and-%E2%80%9Cghost-fishing%E2%80%9D\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/new-proposal-will-tackle-marine-litter-and-%E2%80%9Cghost-fishing%E2%80%9D_en)

47. Per Baungart/McDonough, a Circular Economy is an economy wherein products and materials should be designed with life cycles that are safe for human health and the environment and that can be reused perpetually through biological and technical metabolisms. This definition therefore does not consider incineration or waste-from-energy to be a form of resource recovery or recycling.

48. See the following Plastics Declaration for more details on a call for a national waste reduction strategy from 43 Canadian environmental organizations, including six Green Budget Coalition members: [https://www.wcel.org/sites/default/files/publications/final\\_plastics\\_declaration\\_v3.pdf](https://www.wcel.org/sites/default/files/publications/final_plastics_declaration_v3.pdf)

49. For more details on these steps and the rationale, please see: Letter to Minister McKenna. Request for Addition of Single-Use Plastics, Microplastics and Microfibers to Priority Substances List Pursuant to s. 76(3) of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999. June 7, 2018. [https://www.ecojustice.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Plastics\\_CEPA\\_Priority\\_Substances\\_List\\_Request\\_June\\_7\\_2018.pdf](https://www.ecojustice.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Plastics_CEPA_Priority_Substances_List_Request_June_7_2018.pdf)

50. For one example of a recent subsidy to a plastic manufacturer, see <https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2018/02/15/ottawa-gives-plastics-giant-35m-grant-despite-commitment-to-reduce-use-of-single-use-plastics.html>