

An open letter to leaders at all levels of government on plastics waste policy in Canada

Earlier today, the Government of Canada announced several steps it will be taking to reduce plastic pollution, protect wildlife, and make our economy stronger. This is the federal government's contribution to the Canada-wide Zero Plastic Waste Action Plan that is expected to be finalized in Halifax later this month, outlining the coordinated actions of federal, provincial and territorial levels of governments.

The Circular Economy Leadership Coalition (CELC) is keen to see further details about the federal government's plan and the corresponding investments, but we applaud the smart combination of regulatory interventions, business-enabling approaches, and investments in science and innovation. These are all core elements to advance the circular economy – an economy that places a value on our precious and finite resources, designs waste out of the system and restores damaged ecosystems. We strongly encourage all levels of government to demonstrate similar leadership.

The CELC is a not-for-profit alliance of corporate and NGO leaders, think tanks and sustainability experts who believe Canada can be a world leader in advancing a prosperous, sustainable and zero-waste 'circular economy' that more efficiently uses our precious natural resources in a closed loop that repeatedly recovers value from waste generated at all stages of our economy.

Earlier this year our coalition endorsed the "G7 Oceans Plastics Charter" and the Ellen MacArthur Foundation's "New Plastics Economy Global Commitment". We also commissioned a paper from the Smart Prosperity Institute entitled "[A Vision for a Circular Economy for Plastics in Canada: The Benefits of Plastics Without the Waste and How We Get it Right](#)" – many of the recommendations from which appear to be reflected in the government's agenda for action.

Through these efforts, our coalition members – including some of Canada's leading brand owners such as Canadian Tire, IKEA, Loblaw Companies Ltd., Unilever, and Walmart – join a growing global community of business

leaders who recognize that their actions alone are not sufficient for achieving the wide-sweeping systems change that will be required to achieve a zero-plastics waste world.

We support the multi-pronged strategy being advanced by the government and are particularly pleased to see important action being taken to advance a more equitable, effective and efficient Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) system where companies will be responsible for collecting and recycling the packaging they use or sell.

Key to the success of a national EPR system will be the harmonization of definitions, performance targets, recycling standards and performance measurement tools. These will help establish the common set of rules required for efficient markets and supply-chains as it relates to end-of-use packaging and other materials that will ultimately be collected from millions of citizens and move them to larger scale recycling facilities equipped with the latest sorting and recycling technologies.

Alignment among the federal, provincial and territorial governments is critical, demonstrating Canadian leadership to ensure the transition to a zero-waste plastics economy is not only good for business and for the environment, but also helps set the foundation for a more comprehensive multi-sector transition to a prosperous circular economy for Canada.

In 2020, Canada will host the World Circular Economy Forum (WCEF). WCEF 2020 presents a unique moment in time to mobilize the collective strengths of Canada's government, business and civil society community to accelerate action nation-wide. Today's announcement is a clear demonstration of Canada's leadership. We look forward to working together to implement these policies and ensuring we collectively have a compelling story to tell about our transition when Canada hosts the World Circular Economy Forum.

Thank you.

Members of the Circular Economy Leadership Coalition
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