



Governance & Services Committee

TO: Governance and Services Committee
FROM: Jodie Foster, Director of Communication & Information Services
DATE: October 2, 2019
SUBJECT: Clean BC Plastics Action Plan Consultation Submission

Purpose: To provide the Governance and Services Committee an update on the Clean BC Plastics Action Plan Consultation Process and the submission that was sent from the Regional District of Central Okanagan.

Executive Summary:

Regional District staff provided a technical submission in response to the Government of BC's Clean BC Plastics Action Plan Consultation Process regarding the reduction of plastic pollution in British Columbia.

The RDCO's submission is attached to this report and outlines the following:

- Favouring policies that move the focus up the waste hierarchy (reduce, reuse, recycle)
- Eliminating the production of waste at the source rather than relying on disposal bans
- Working to phase out materials that cannot be recycled or composted first
- Keeping products in use as long as possible (Right to Repair and requirements to publish repair manuals)
- Further clarifying authorities at the federal, provincial and local government levels and ensuring a coordinated response

Because the subject matter is a key priority for the Regional Board, this issue is being brought forward to the Committee for information purposes.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Governance and Services Committee receive for information the formal feedback submission to the Province as part of the Clean BC Plastics Action Plan consultation.

Respectfully Submitted:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jodie Foster".

Jodie Foster
Director of Communication & Information Services

Approved for Committee's Consideration

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian Reardon".

Brian Reardon, CAO

Implications of Recommendation:

Strategic Plan: Single-use plastics are addressed in both the Regional Board's Strategic Priorities and in the RDCO's Solid Waste Management Plan. The Regional Board Priorities outline "exploring regional waste-to-energy opportunities and an approach to single-use plastics pursuant to the Solid Waste Management Plan" and the Solid Waste Management Plan lists strategy #2 as "encourage residents to reuse bags through an awareness campaign and consider banning targeted materials (e.g. single-use plastic bags)".

Background:

The Province conducted engagement across BC regarding options to reduce plastic pollution based on their Plastics Action Plan Policy Consultation Paper. Engagement was for individuals through an online survey, as well as formal submissions via email from organizations including local governments. Feedback was required by September 30, 2019. More information about the Plastics Action Plan can be found at cleanbc.gov.bc.ca/plastics.

The Plastic Action Plan Policy Consultation Paper includes exploration of new policy options in four areas:

- Bans on single-use packaging – determining what types of plastic packaging to phase out, as well as any necessary exemptions, such as those for health, safety and accessibility to keep products available for people that need them
- Reducing single-use plastics in landfills and waterways – requiring producers to take responsibility for more plastic products, ensuring more single-use items like sandwich bags and cutlery get recycled
- Plastic bottle and beverage container returns – expanding the deposit-refund system to cover all beverage containers including milk and milk-substitutes, with a 10-cent refundable deposit, keeping millions more containers out of the landfills and waterways
- Reducing plastics overall – supporting effective ways to prevent plastic waste in the first place and ensuring recycled plastic is re-used effectively

Plastics, particularly single-use plastics, have been a concern for the RDCO and many other Regional Districts across BC. Regional Districts in BC do not have authority to ban the use of single-use plastics under the powers delegated to them by the *Local Government Act* and *Community Charter*. While a number of local municipalities have already proceeded to introduce bylaws regulating the use of single-use plastics including Vancouver, Victoria, Tofino, and Qualicum Beach, the BC Court of Appeal recently struck down the City of Victoria's checkout bag ban bylaw. This leaves local governments unsure whether individual efforts will be successful.

Managing plastic waste is a complex issue and each level of government has different authorities to regulate it:

- Federal Government – has the ability to regulate plastic products and deals with discharge of waste into the oceans. The Government of Canada is developing an action plan to implement the Canada-wide Strategy on Zero Plastic Waste banning harmful single-use plastics as early as 2021
- Provincial Government – has regulatory ability to ban single-use plastics that end up in the environment and waste stream. The Province is currently undertaking consultation

on the Plastics Action Plan with a proposed implementation of fall of 2019 or winter of 2020.

- Regional Districts – implement solid waste management plans and can ban materials from their landfills.

RDCO staff worked collaboratively with other waste reduction professionals across BC to review the options and provide feedback for the formal submission.

The formal submission from the RDCO is:

- Based on the collective local government feedback as developed collaboratively with waste reduction professionals across BC
- Tailored to the RDCO's needs based on our local systems and the priorities as outlined in the Solid Waste Management Plan

Submission to the Province

The RDCO's submission is attached and outlines:

- Favouring policies that move the focus up the waste hierarchy (reduce, reuse, recycle)
- Eliminating the production of waste at the source rather than relying on disposal bans
- Working to phase out materials that cannot be recycled or composted first
- Keeping products in use as long as possible (Right to Repair and requirements to publish repair manuals)
- Further clarifying authorities at the federal, provincial and local government levels and ensuring a coordinated response

Staff will provide information on the consultation results as they become available.

Considerations not applicable to this report:

Financial Considerations:

Organizational Issues:

External Implications:

Alternative Recommendation:

Attachment(s): Clean Plastics Action Plan formal submission from the RDCO