

Government of Canada taking action to reduce plastic pollution

Plastic has thousands of useful applications, but is often mismanaged and ends up polluting our environment and wasting valuable resources. Reducing plastic pollution and investing in Canadian innovation are part of the Government of Canada's overall plan to protect the environment and fight climate change to build a stronger economy and healthier communities.

The Government of Canada is taking the following steps to reduce plastic pollution, working with provinces, territories, businesses, and others. This includes ongoing work through the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment to develop an action plan to implement the Canada-wide Strategy on Zero Plastic Waste.

Banning harmful single-use plastics as early as 2021 under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act and taking other steps to reduce plastic waste, where supported by scientific evidence and when warranted – and taking other steps to reduce plastic waste

The ban would reduce pollution from single-use plastic products and packaging – such as shopping bags, straws, cutlery, plates, and stir sticks – that science indicates are harmful to the environment and human health, where warranted. The specific products and measures included in the ban will be determined following a State of the Science assessment on plastic pollution in the environment, which is already underway and will include a peer review, public consultations, and socio-economic considerations. Additional regulatory actions could include requiring products to contain a set amount of recycled content, or be capable of being recycled or repaired.

Ensuring that companies that manufacture plastic products or sell items with plastic packaging are responsible for managing the collection and recycling of their plastic waste

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) programs are recognized as an effective mechanism to support the creation of a circular economy. Under an EPR program, companies making products are responsible for the end-of-life management of their products and packaging. The Government of Canada will work with provinces and territories, through the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment, to support the development of consistent EPR programs across the country. The Government of Canada will also work in collaboration with provinces, territories and industry to set targets for plastics collection, recycling, and recycled content requirements.

Working with industry to prevent and retrieve abandoned, lost, or discarded fishing gear, known as ghost fishing gear – a major contributor to marine plastic debris

The Government of Canada will work with stakeholders through a new Sustainable Fisheries Solutions and Retrieval Support Contribution Program. We will support fish harvesters to acquire new gear technologies to reduce gear loss, and take concrete actions to support ghost gear retrieval and responsible disposal. We will work together with Canadians to reduce the impacts of ghost fishing gear in our aquatic ecosystems and keep our endangered marine animals safe.

Investing in new Canadian technologies

Through the Canadian Plastics Innovation Challenge, the Government of Canada is helping small businesses across the country find new ways to reduce plastic waste and turn waste into valuable resources supporting a circular economy. Seven challenges have been launched so far, providing over \$10 million dollars to 18 Canadian small- and medium-sized enterprises. These businesses are working to reduce plastic waste from food packaging, construction waste, marine vessels, and fishing gear. They are also improving plastic recycling through artificial intelligence and refining technologies for bioplastics.

Mobilizing international support to address plastic pollution

At the 2018 G7 in Charlevoix, Canada launched the Ocean Plastics Charter, which outlines concrete actions to eradicate plastic pollution and recognizes the need for urgent action to address the devastating impacts of marine litter on the health and sustainability of our oceans, seas, coastal communities, and ecosystems. As of May 2019, the Charter has been endorsed by 21 governments and 60 businesses and organizations.

Investing in waste management solutions in developing countries is essential to reducing marine litter. The Government of Canada is contributing \$100 million to help developing countries prevent plastic waste from entering the oceans, address plastic waste on shorelines, and better manage existing plastic resources. This includes \$65 million through the World Bank, \$6 million to strengthen innovative private-public partnerships through the World Economic Forum's Global Plastic Action Partnership, and \$20 million to help implement the G7 Innovation Challenge to Address Marine Plastic Litter.

Reducing plastic waste from federal operations

The Government of Canada is strengthening policies, requirements, and guidelines that promote sustainable procurement practices, and has committed to divert at least 75 per cent of plastic waste from federal operations by 2030. These changes will promote the purchase of goods and services that use reusable, recyclable, or compostable plastics or contain renewable or recycled plastic content.

Reducing plastic microbeads in freshwater marine ecosystems

To reduce the amount of plastic microbeads entering Canadian freshwater and marine ecosystems, Canada prohibited the manufacture and import of all toiletries that contain plastic microbeads (such as bath and body products) as of July 1, 2018. A complete ban comes into force July 1, 2019.

Supporting community-led action and citizen-science activities

To help keep our shorelines, bodies of water, parks, and other natural places free of plastic pollution, the Government of Canada will provide \$1.5 million in 2019 for organizations to start new plastics projects that mobilize and engage citizens. The Government of Canada will support community-led action through education, outreach, and citizen science, and support concrete actions through community cleanups and demonstrations to reduce plastic waste.

Launching Canada's Plastics Science Agenda

The Government of Canada will accelerate research along the lifecycle of plastics and on the impacts of plastics pollution on humans, wildlife, and the environment. It will support evidence-based decision-making and innovative approaches to sustainable plastics production, recycling, and recovery. Canada's Plastics Science Agenda will also identify priority areas for multi-sector research partnerships to help achieve Canada's zero plastic waste goals.