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Immediate release

Regulatory Actions to Plastic Pollution in Canada closer with addition of “Plastic Manufactured Items” to CEPA Toxic Substances List

Environmental and Health organizations call for fast regulatory actions on plastic items

TORONTO — The federal government’s decision to list “Plastic manufactured items” under Schedule 1 Toxic Substances List of the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act* (CEPA) is an important step in addressing the plastic pollution crisis and a meaningful move towards a ban on non-essential single-use plastic that impacts human health, pollutes the environment, and kills the wildlife.

Canada generates 3 million tonnes of plastic waste every year. With the Canadian plastics economy being mostly linear, most of the plastics Canadians use and discard ends up in landfills or incinerated where toxic plastic chemicals leach into the environment and contaminate air, soil and water, impacting neighbouring communities. Plastic pollution destroys aquatic systems and harms the wildlife; it affects the food we eat and the water we drink. Approaches to achieve reductions of plastic pollution require strict regulations, producer responsibility and timelines be in place.

With the order to list “Plastic manufactured items” under Schedule 1, Canada has the authority to take actions on plastic pollution and waste including promulgating regulations in 2021 to ban harmful single-use items, including shopping bags, straws, cutlery, plates, six-pack rings and stir sticks and address production, use and disposal. Strengthening Canada’s approach to plastic manufactured items will stimulate innovations towards effective circular economy through improved recycling, and toxic-free product design.

“The decision by the Minister is critical if Canada is to reduce the threat of plastics to the environment and people’s health. The government should build on its decision by enacting strong regulatory measures to protect our Great Lakes and inland lakes, oceans, land and wildlife populations from plastic pollution.” states Fe de Leon, Researcher with the Canadian Environmental Law Association.

“We see opportunities now under CEPA for the government to ban non-essential use of plastics to reduce plastic pollution,” states John Jackson, Coordinator of Citizens’

Network on Waste Management. "Canada's approach should also ensure that we elevate the accountability of producers through effective Extended Producer Responsibility and innovative designs rather than by directing investments to supporting thermal incineration processes or poor recycling practices."

"Plastic is choking wildlife and causing unprecedented damage to people's health. The CEPA listing is an important step towards minimizing plastic's threat and a strong signal to the plastic industry that the government is taking the plastic crisis seriously," states Dr. Olga Speranskaya, Co-Director with Health and Environment Justice Support. "The Minister's decision to declare "plastic manufactured items" under Schedule 1 – List of Toxic Substances under CEPA should be the beginning of progressive actions to drastically reduce pollution."

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