

From: [Farrah Khan](#)
To: [Clerk](#)
Subject: My comments for 2018.PW31.10 on July 23, 2018 City Council
Date: July 19, 2018 12:34:38 AM

To the City Clerk:

Please add my comments to the agenda for the July 23, 2018 City Council meeting on item 2018.PW31.10, Options to Address Single-Use Items, Misleading Advertising, and Textile Waste in the City of Toronto.

I understand that my comments and the personal information in this email will form part of the public record and that my name will be listed as a correspondent on agendas and minutes of City Council or its committees. Also, I understand that agendas and minutes are posted online and my name may be indexed by search engines like Google.

Comments:

To: Toronto City Council

Re: Comments for July 23, 2018 City Council meeting on item 2018.PW31.10, Options to Address Single-Use Items, Misleading Advertising, and Textile Waste in the City of Toronto.

My name is Farrah Khan and I am a plastics campaigner with Greenpeace Canada. I have been working in the environmental sector for thirteen years and in that time I have focussed on issues related to environmental justice, environmental health, and packaging reduction. I am also a Toronto resident, born in Ward 1 (Etobicoke North) and currently living in Ward 17 (Davenport.)

Greenpeace encourages Toronto City Council to approve the recommendations presented by the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee (*Communication PW31.10.8*) and to take strong and swift action to address the epidemic of plastic pollution that is harming communities, wildlife, waterways, and water bodies here in Toronto and around the world.

We believe that key to addressing the immense problem of plastic pollution is to implement solutions that mirror the scale of the crisis. As with many common-sense approaches, the best way to stop this problem is to address it right at the source and curb the production and use of single-use plastics — one of the major contributors to plastic pollution.

We are calling on all levels of government to do their part by phasing-out single use plastic items that are used for minutes and that can pollute for centuries. We are also looking to governments to hold plastic producers responsible for the full lifecycle of their products, without offloading end of life waste management onto customers and municipalities. Finally, we are encouraging governments to invest in research and development to find innovative solutions to designing new delivery systems based on reuse that will result in more

sustainable and healthier communities.

As a global organization, Greenpeace campaigns in many regions and we have witnessed the impacts of plastic pollution first-hand. From beaches trashed with overwhelming amounts of plastics in the Philippines, to finding microplastics in the Antarctic, in the Great Lakes and in drinking water, plastic pollution is everywhere. The good news is that people are speaking up and urging corporations and governments to act. Cities are among the leaders pushing for solutions to this growing problem and we are very pleased to see the City of Toronto on track to join the growing movement of change-makers who are recognizing the plastic problem and taking action to stop this unacceptable flow of pollution into the environment.

Here are my comments around the specific recommendations from the PWIC:

Recommendations 1 and 2, to consult and develop a policy to restrict plastic straws by Q1 2019, is an excellent move and a way to quickly do away with a single-use disposable item. We urge City Council to extend this restriction to all common single-use plastic items including bags, cutlery, cups and containers within a similar timely manner through the work plan proposed in Recommendation 3.

To accommodate persons with disabilities who may require to the use of a straw, we would suggest the City implement a policy where restaurants, cafes, and other food-services businesses have non-plastic straws on-hand and available by request whenever necessary, with reusable options for dining in.

We would encourage that City of Toronto staff learn from actions taken in other jurisdictions across Canada, including the Victoria and Montreal plastic bag bans, and the Vancouver ban on styrofoam cups and containers. It is important to note the recent precedent setting Supreme Court of BC decision that upheld the City of Victoria's right to implement their own by-law banning plastic bags (*Canadian Plastic Bag Association v. Victoria (City)*, 2018 BCSC 1007 – 2018/06/19 Supreme Court.) This decision proves that cities have the jurisdiction to pass such by-laws and, in a broader sense, illustrates a changing tide in public discourse away from accepting polluting plastics to be so ubiquitously used and to hold the corporations that produce them to account.

Recommendation 4 to have City divisions, agencies, and corporations reduce single-use or takeaway packaging could be strengthened to a complete phase-out of throwaway packaging in City venues in favour of reusable containers. We would encourage a system similar to the University of Toronto's Eco Tray program where reusable containers are used at different locations across campus with a fully refundable deposit-return system. Reusable approaches such as this are a good method of closing the loop on food packaging waste and modelling a much more sustainable system. We would also

encourage the City of Toronto to consider implementing a pilot program for reusables more broadly, such as mug-sharing which is currently being explored by the City of Vancouver.

Thank you for considering these comments. I am available to answer questions at the coordinates below. Greenpeace looks forward to the opportunity to participate in the upcoming public consultations, and to encouraging our supporters from across the city to do so as well.

For a plastic-free environment,
Farrah

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