

Dear Mayor Olivia Chow, Councillor Jennifer McKelvie and City Council,

As a group of concerned citizens, we at Canada Reduces volunteer our time to help businesses and customers reduce single-use plastics and other waste in their establishments and homes. We have spent countless hours asking local businesses to display stickers indicating that they accept reusable mugs/containers, advocating for low waste policies, and helping Reduces groups across North America to develop their own local waste reduction programs. To date, there are approximately 20 of these community groups across various Wards within the City of Toronto (all run by volunteers), and hundreds of participating businesses. This participation shows the care and commitment that the residents of this City have for this issue.

Unfortunately, given the size of the problem, it is clear that these efforts are a very small drop in the bucket in comparison to what is needed to reduce the reliance on single-use plastics and other disposables, which are most often produced by fossil fuels. In general, local businesses want to do the right thing but few want to take action on their own nor do they want to face customer resistance if there aren't more formal policies in place for all establishments.

We worry about the massive scale of environmental destruction and generational unfairness for the young people in our lives. Other jurisdictions have started to take this issue seriously and we would like Toronto to follow their lead by helping local restaurants and food businesses to shift from harmful single-use plastics and other disposables to reusable alternatives.

We support TEA and Reusable Toronto's call for action, and urge the City of Toronto to:

1. Move quickly on an 'ask-first' regulation to reduce unnecessary accessory foodware
2. Help reduce takeout foodware waste by requiring acceptance of customer cups
3. Develop a plan for requiring restaurants to provide reusable cups and foodware for dine-in orders
4. Develop a plan for requiring reusable cups and foodware at venues and events
5. Support reusable, returnable takeout programs
6. Follow through on your commitment to lead by example and shift to zero-waste reusables in City facilities
7. Support small restaurants with training and microgrants to adopt reusables

Most residents and establishments are ready to do their part to reduce waste but we need the City's leadership to make this a reality. Please help us to cut down on single-use plastics by supporting businesses in reducing waste and adopting reusable options for take-out and dine-in.

Sincerely,

For Canada Reduces:

Angela Lian
Ewa Shields
Mark Simmons
Tina Soldovieri
Beth Szurpicki