



May 2, 2024

Infrastructure & Environment Committee
Toronto City Council
City Hall, 100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2
By email: iec@toronto.ca

Re: IE 13.6 Update on Stage 2 of the Single-Use and Takeaway Items Reduction Strategy

Dear Infrastructure and Environment Committee and members of Council,

The Toronto Environmental Alliance has been advocating for zero waste policies and programs for over thirty years. **We urge you to move forward quickly with local regulations to ban single-use plastics in Toronto as a key part of a comprehensive Single-Use and Takeaway Items Reduction Strategy.**

Overall, we feel the Single-Use Reduction Strategy is moving in the right direction to help our city eliminate unnecessary single-use items, and make the shift towards reusable, zero waste alternatives. When Council began developing the Single-Use Reduction Strategy more than 5 years ago, it was based on broad public demand for action on plastic and waste, recognizing that a strategy needs to combine a range of voluntary tools such as incentives, education, support with mandatory tools, such as regulations and bans.

Banning and restricting the most harmful plastic items was supported by Torontonians in the public consultation during the development of the Strategy. When the federal government announced its plan to ban some single-use plastics, City staff adapted Toronto's strategy to integrate and build on that nation-wide regulation.

The federal ban on certain single-use plastics - plastic bags, utensils, foam and black plastic food containers - was based on a comprehensive analysis of plastic flow and waste data, scientific assessments of the presence of plastic in the environment and the potential alternatives. The ban was phased-in over a number of years, and in response, suppliers of those materials stopped selling those items, and locally major chains and small businesses alike have adapted to the regulations.

However, as they do in every country, jurisdiction, province and city where plastic regulations are proposed, major companies in the Plastic industry are fighting against the federal ban. They are challenging the jurisdiction of the federal government and the procedures used to pass the ban. This puts that regulation at risk - which puts our city at risk of once again being littered with items like plastic bags and cutlery all through our ravines, parks and streets.

Without that foundation of that federal ban, the City's Single-Use Reduction Strategy has critical gaps and loopholes - for example, the City has restrictions on single-use paper bags, but absolutely no regulation, restriction or even guidance on reducing single-use plastic bags.

Many provinces and cities across Canada have passed their own local bans on single-use plastic items covered by the federal ban. Vancouver, Edmonton, Guelph, Montreal and Sault Ste Marie for example have passed their own local bans based on the local environmental impacts of these items. This ensures that those items are banned for good, no matter what happens at the federal level, and Toronto should do the same.

To build on the gains made in the City's Single-Use Reduction Strategy, and to ensure we don't backtrack on single-use plastics that have already been removed from stores across the country, we urge council to take swift action to pass local bans on those same items.

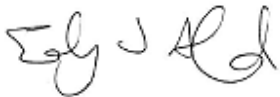
We urge City Council to:

- **Prepare for and pass a municipal ban on single-use plastic items covered by the federal ban as soon as possible.** Developing and passing a local regulation should begin immediately to reduce the risk of single-use plastics returning to our city's streets, ravines and waterways.
- **Monitor and track the prevalence of other top single-use items to prepare future regulations on the worst plastics.** A number of other single-use plastics and other disposable items cause harm in our city and show up as top litter items, such as cigarette and vape accessories and single use cups.
- Continue exploring regulations and options to prompt a shift from single-use items of any material towards safe, zero waste reusables.

TEA launched an email petition earlier this week and residents from across the city have sent messages to the Mayor, the Chair of this committee, and to the sender's local councillor urging all of you to move forward with a single-use plastic ban in Toronto (Copy of letter attached).

We hope to see Council move quickly on this strategy and maintain this momentum.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Emily Alfred'.

Emily Alfred, Waste Campaigner, Toronto Environmental Alliance

Attachment 1: TEA email action to Toronto Council

Attachment 1:

Toronto Environmental Alliance email action to Toronto Council

Subject: Stand up to Big Plastic Companies: Ban Single-Use Plastics in TO

Dear Mayor Olivia Chow and Deputy Mayor Jennifer McKelvie

Our world is facing a plastic crisis, and as the international community is talking about what we can do globally, I want you to take action locally.

I want you to pass local regulations to ban harmful single-use plastics, just like other Canadian cities and a growing number of jurisdictions around the world.

Toronto businesses big and small have already phased out their use of many problem plastic items and adapted to the federal ban on single-use plastics. But this ban is now under grave threat, with big oil and plastic companies aggressively fighting to get it reversed. A local ban will protect our environment and provide certainty so that no matter what happens at the federal level, we won't see a return of plastic bags floating down our streets, foam clamshells in the litter and non-recyclable black plastic in our garbage.

A growing number of Canadian cities have passed their own municipal bans and Toronto residents have already shown strong support for a local ban in City polls, just like Canadians across the country.

I urge you to commit to local municipal by-laws to ban harmful single-use plastics consistent with the federal ban such as plastic bags, foam foodware, black plastic and utensils.

Sincerely

(name)