



May 17, 2021

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Environment and Climate Change  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Wilkinson,

As Canadian environmental organizations concerned with plastic pollution, we urge Canada to support the proposal to establish a Global Plastics Agreement at the UN Environment Assembly in February 2022.

Historically, Canada has been a forefront leader in the negotiation of multiple global multilateral environmental agreements addressing chemicals and waste, most notably the Stockholm Convention, Montreal Protocol and Minamata Convention. Looking forward, as the international community convenes to forge new and necessary responses to the urgent issue of plastic pollution, we hope that the legacy of strong Canadian contribution to multilateral environmental agreements will be strengthened.

As you know, plastic pollution is ubiquitous in the environment, and your department's science assessment confirmed that macroplastic pollution poses an ecological hazard, including physical harm, to some animals and their habitat.<sup>1</sup>

We applaud your recent decision to list "plastic manufactured items" on Schedule 1 of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. Moving forward with proposed regulations to ban non-essential single-use plastics and require new plastic products to contain a significant

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<https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/evaluating-existing-substances/science-assessment-plastic-pollution.html>

amount of recycled material, among other measures, will help ensure that Canada is doing its part to reduce plastic pollution at home.

The Government of Canada has also recognized that “Marine plastic litter is a global problem that requires global action to bring real change.”<sup>2</sup> Canada’s leadership on the Oceans Plastics Charter during its 2018 G7 presidency helped raise international attention to the plastic pollution problem. The United Nations now identifies plastic pollution as the second most ominous threat to the global environment after climate change. Voluntary commitments will not be sufficient to address this global threat.

We believe an international agreement on plastic pollution is a necessary complement to proposed domestic regulations and other initiatives to date. We therefore urge you to add Canada’s support, at the earliest opportunity, for the establishment of a Global Plastics Agreement.

Sincerely,

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*c.c. Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister*  
*Hon. Marc Garneau, Minister of Foreign Affairs*  
*Hon. Bernadette Jordan, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans*

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<https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/managing-reducing-waste/international-commitments/ocean-plastics-charter.html>