



SEP 14 2018

Mr. James Gunvaldsen Klaassen
Barrister and Solicitor
Ecojustice
jgunvaldsenklaassen@ecojustice.ca

Dear Mr. Gunvaldsen Klaassen:

Thank you for your correspondence of June 7, 2018, written on behalf of Environmental Defence, Living Oceans, the Toronto Environmental Alliance, Équiterre, the Ecology Action Centre, Greenpeace, the Sierra Club Canada Foundation, the Canadian Environmental Law Association, the Citizens' Network on Waste Management and the David Suzuki Foundation, requesting, among other things, that single-use plastics, microplastics and plastic microfibers be added to the Priority Substances List under section 76(3) of the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999* (CEPA). As required under section 76(4), this letter outlines how I intend to address your request.

Subsection 76(3) of the Act concerning the Priority Substances List is the responsibility of both the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and the Minister of Health; therefore, I am forwarding a copy of this reply to my colleague, the Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor, for information.

As you are aware, Canada recently hosted the G7 Leaders' Summit, held on June 8 and 9 in Charlevoix, Quebec. One outcome of that meeting was the Charlevoix Blueprint for Healthy Oceans, Seas and Resilient Coastal Communities, which will promote sustainable oceans and fisheries, support resilient coasts and coastal communities, and take action on ocean plastic waste and marine litter. Canada, France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy and the European Union also agreed to the Ocean Plastics Charter, committing to move toward a more resource-efficient and sustainable approach to the management of plastics. Countries agreed that the current approach to producing, using, managing and disposing of plastics poses a significant threat to the environment, to livelihoods and potentially to human health. The Charter can be found at <https://g7.gc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/OceanPlasticsCharter.pdf>.

Canada's vision is a zero plastic waste future. Canada will invest \$100 million through an international marine litter mitigation fund, will address plastic waste on shorelines, and will better manage existing plastic resources. Canada has

.../2

also invested \$1.5 billion in the national Oceans Protection Plan. On September 19 to 21, I will co-host, with the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, and the Minister of Natural Resources, a meeting of G7 environment, energy and oceans ministers in Halifax, Nova Scotia, to discuss, among other important environmental issues, the issue of plastic pollution. This fall, I will also meet with provincial and territorial ministers of environment at the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment to discuss a plastics waste strategy for Canada and the development of an action plan in 2019.

To ensure that the development of concrete actions to support a plastics waste strategy are based on science and evidence, Environment and Climate Change Canada and Health Canada will conduct a science workshop this fall. It will bring together scientific and implementation experts to discuss the current state of science concerning the effects of plastic waste on the environment and human health in order to inform risk assessment and risk-management action to address plastic pollution, including in regard to single use plastics, microplastics and microfibers. The European Union Group of Chief Scientific Advisors has recently announced a similar strategy, focused on microplastics, to ensure that policy and action are underpinned by science and evidence. That strategy, entitled *Initial Statement by the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors: A Scientific Perspective on Microplastic Pollution and its Impacts*, can be found at https://ec.europa.eu/research/sam/pdf/topics/mp_statement_july-2018.pdf.

As you know, the Government of Canada has already listed and regulated the elimination of microbeads in toiletries. The science workshop, together with Canada's intensive domestic and international engagement with government, industry and civil society partners, will inform additional actions under CEPA and by other partners toward the goal of zero plastic waste, such as product specifications, performance agreements for certain sectors, measures to increase collection (e.g. extended-producer responsibility) and support for recycled plastics markets (e.g. recycled content requirements).

In your letter, you requested that I assess whether obligations in relation to international water pollution under Part 7, Division 7 of CEPA have been triggered and, if so, to take any necessary action. The science workshop will also provide an opportunity to help inform any future actions related to this and other sections of CEPA, and by partners.

Please rest assured that I remain committed to using all instruments at my disposal, including the tools in CEPA, to advance Canada's vision of a zero plastic waste future and deliver on Canada's plastics waste strategy.

- 3 -

I trust that this information is of assistance, and I extend my best wishes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C McKenna', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

The Honourable Catherine McKenna, P.C., M.P.

c.c.: The Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor, P.C., M.P.