



# Backgrounder

## Overview

In June 2022, Canada [released](#) the *Single-use Plastics Prohibition Regulations*, following the inclusion of plastic manufactured items to schedule 1 to the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. The banned six items represented notable contributors to Canada's plastic waste and pollution crisis; however, banning these items alone will not address the waste and pollution crisis.

For the first time since initially calling for Canada's single-use plastic ban to be expanded, a coalition of environmental organizations including Greenpeace Canada, Environmental Defence, Toronto Environmental Alliance, the David Suzuki Foundation and many more, have agreed on a list of priority problematic products, polymers and chemicals associated with plastic production.

The groups, joined by over 60 other NGOs and businesses, are calling on the federal government to act swiftly to ban the next six single-use plastic manufactured item categories, as well as chemical plastics additives and polymers of particular concern.

## Notable facts

- According to Canadian shoreline and community clean-up [data for 2021](#), single-use food and beverage items, consisting of containers, bottles, cutlery, wrappers, etc., consists of 32 per cent of all litter and pollution collected.
- Smoking-related pollution [accounted for 28 per cent of pollution in 2021](#).
- The Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME) assessed various problem plastics beyond the current ban list in a [recent report](#). Many of the products proposed below for addition to the ban list were assessed as problematic for the environment and waste management.
- The current plastic ban accounts for only [3% of Canada's plastic waste](#).

### All takeout containers, cups and lids

- Includes foodservice ware in a variety of sizes in formats such as clamshells, containers, boxes, cups, plates, bowls and cups with and without lids.
- Over 5 billion coffee cups and lids are thrown out in Canada each year.
- Cups and lids are among the top polluters [collected in Canada annually](#).
- [Reuse](#) and [refill](#) models and programs exist in various sectors. One example of a [public-private partnership](#) is being piloted in Vancouver with the goal of increasing access and uptake of reuse-refill-return models.

### Bottles

- Includes beverage and food product bottles, personal care product/toiletry bottles, home and industrial product containers, and caps, across sectors.



- About [7.6 billion beverage bottles](#) are sold annually in Canada.
- [Bottles and caps](#) are among the most commonly collected types of plastic pollution annually.
- The European Commission has proposed an EU-wide [ban on miniature toiletry bottles](#) found in hotels.
- Reuse and refill models for beverages, water, [cleaning products](#), personal care products and beyond already exist in Canada.

### **Bags, film, and wrap**

- Includes but is not limited to overwrap for food and non-food products; bags other than checkout; woven, net and other produce bags; bread and other food bags; bulk food bags; film used to contain items and portions on trays.
- This category encompasses many types of plastics, it is the most [commonly exported](#) type of plastic waste due to its [low value in the recycling market](#).
- Flimsy, thin plastics contain phthalates, a chemical increasingly linked with [cancer](#) and [reproductive disorders](#).
- [Other jurisdictions](#) are already banning use of these materials in certain applications.

### **Filtered cigarettes**

- Cigarette filters are the single [most common type](#) of plastic pollution collected across Canada, and they [leach toxic chemicals](#) into the environment and contribute to [microplastic pollution](#).
- Filtered cigarettes actually [increase health risks](#) to smokers.

### **Sachets, pouches, and wrappers**

- An estimated [999 billion](#) sachets are produced globally each year.
- Food wrappers are [the fourth most common](#) type of litter found in cleanups nationwide.
- Multilayered packaging is almost [never recycled](#) and is often [burned](#) via incineration or waste-to-energy to avoid landfilling.
- A [2019 report](#) found that the primary sources of greenhouse gas emissions from plastic waste are incineration and waste-to-energy.

### **Produce stickers**

- Produce stickers are a leading contaminant in [compost](#) and contribute to [microplastic accumulation in soil](#).
- Stickers commonly go down household drains, causing problems for wastewater [systems](#).
- [Alternatives to produce stickers](#) have been tested and developed in the [retail sector](#).
- Produce stickers on spoiled produce can result in commercial loads of landfilled [food waste](#).

### **Highly problematic plastic substances**

- Examples: PVC, polystyrene, bisphenols, PFAS, so-called flushables. Full list found [here](#).
- Phthalates, PFAS, Bisphenols and Brominated flame retardants are chemicals used in plastic production that are known endocrine disruptors.
- There is [growing support for a ban on expanded polystyrene](#) in marine applications in B.C.
- Other jurisdictions have moved to ban a variety of problematic substances including [PVC](#), [phthalates](#) and [PFAS](#) among others.