



# Jonathan Wilkinson

NORTH VANCOUVER'S MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

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## A National Strategy for Zero Plastic Waste

About one third of plastics used in Canada every day are single-use products - close to 57 million straws each day and up to 15 billion plastic bags every year! Then, we simply throw them away. In fact, Canadians trash over 3 million tons of plastic waste a year. This isn't just devastating to our environment - it's bad for business. All that plastic waste represents nearly \$8B per year in lost value, wasting useable resources and energy.

We've known for a long time that plastic pollution harms the environment; it's particularly hard on wildlife and ocean ecosystems, including marine mammals, fish and birds. With the longest coastline in the world, and one quarter of the world's fresh water, Canada recognizes that we have both the opportunity and the responsibility to lead in reducing plastic waste.

Last week, the Prime Minister, the Environment Minister and I announced that our government will

- ban harmful, single-use plastics as early as 2021 – items like plastic straws, shopping bags, cutlery, stir sticks, and take-away containers;
- increase recovery of ghost fishing gear floating in our ocean waters;
- implement an Extended Producer Responsibility system to assure that companies responsible for producing plastics collect and recycle their plastic waste.

For more details about the announcement and government's comprehensive plan to reduce plastic waste, follow this link: <https://pm.gc.ca/eng/news/2019/06/10/government-canada-taking-action-reduce-plastic-pollution>.

### Will this make a difference?

Over the last 25 years, nearly 800,000 volunteers have removed 1.3 million kilos of trash from Canada's shorelines through Ocean Wise and World Wildlife Fund's Great Canadian Shoreline Clean-up, supported by the Government of Canada. The most common litter found? Single-use products...mostly plastic.

Another significant pollution problem for ocean ecosystems is abandoned, lost or discarded fishing gear – 460,000 tons of it a year - accounting for as much as 46 percent of plastic garbage in the great Pacific garbage patch. Research suggests it takes

600 years for monofilament fishing nets to break down in the ocean. As long as they are floating around, they are killing fish and wildlife. Each year, one million birds and over 100,000 sea mammals worldwide are injured or die when they mistake plastic waste for food, or become entangled in garbage or fishing nets, and fish suffer collateral damage. So yes, it will make a difference.

### Will it cost me more?

We intend to work with provinces and territories to shift the burden of recovering and recycling plastics to retailers and product manufacturers, through a system known as Extended Producer Responsibility. This lifts the increasing costs of recycling systems from municipalities and provinces, and places it squarely on the producers of such waste. The European Union leads the way in this economically sound approach to discouraging wasteful production practices.

As a government, we have committed to lead by example: we will divert at least 75% of plastic waste from federal operations by 2030, changing our purchasing practices to use more sustainable products, and eliminating unnecessary single-use plastics in meetings, events and government facilities. We'll invest \$10 million to develop innovative, home-grown solutions to reduce plastic waste, and we are launching a new Plastics Science Agenda, which will accelerate research and provide evidence-based solutions to meet our goal of reducing the amount of waste going to landfills by 30% per Canadian by 2030, and by 50% by 2040. This will be a cost saving, and will create jobs for Canadians.

### Is it all our responsibility?

We know that these important steps to reduce plastic waste don't happen in a vacuum. Many other countries struggle just as much to manage their waste. That is why Canada is investing \$100M to address plastic waste management in developing countries, including \$65M through the World Bank, \$6M to private-public partnerships through the World Economic Forum's Global Plastic Action Partnership, and \$290M towards the G7 Innovation Challenge to Address Marine Plastic Litter. North Vancouverites can each be part of the solution, through advocacy and through the choices we make in our daily lives to reduce plastic waste.

## CONTACT INFO:

**CONSTITUENCY OFFICE:** 102 West 3rd Street, North Vancouver  
**EMAIL:** [Jonathan.Wilkinson@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Jonathan.Wilkinson@parl.gc.ca) | **TEL:** 604-775-6333