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**REPORT TITLE: Peel’s Comments on the Federal Discussion Paper: Proposed Integrated Management Approach to Plastic Products to Prevent Waste and Pollution**

**FROM: Andrea Warren, Interim Commissioner of Public Works**

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

**That the comments outlined in the report of the Interim Commissioner of Public Works titled “Peel’s Comments on the Federal Discussion Paper: Proposed Integrated Management Approach to Plastic Products to Prevent Waste and Pollution”, be endorsed.**

### **REPORT HIGHLIGHTS**

- On October 7, 2020, Environment and Climate Change Canada released the “Discussion Paper: Proposed Integrated Management Approach to Plastic Products to Prevent Waste and Pollution” for review with comments due by December 9, 2020.
- On October 22, 2020 Regional Council adopted a motion in support of the federal proposal to ban harmful single-use plastic items in 2021.
- Staff is generally supportive of the proposed approach as it is a necessary step towards zero plastic waste and a circular economy and aligns with the objectives of Peel’s long-term waste management strategy.
- The comments included in Appendix I of this report were submitted to Environment and Climate Change Canada to meet the deadline, with the provision that the comments were subject to Council endorsement.
- Staff will continue to participate in federal consultations related to the reduction of plastic waste and provide updates to Regional Council as appropriate.

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## **DISCUSSION**

### **1. Background**

In 2018, the federal government signaled its intent to move towards a more sustainable approach to producing, using, and managing plastics in Canada. It signed the Ocean Plastics Charter in June 2018 and approved the Canada-wide Strategy on Zero Plastic Waste in November 2018.

On June 28, 2018 Regional Council adopted a motion requesting the federal government to develop a national strategy that addresses plastic pollution (Resolution 2018-630).

On October 7, 2020 Environment and Climate Change Canada released the “Discussion Paper: Proposed Integrated Management Approach to Plastic Products to Prevent Waste and Pollution” for review with comments due by December 9, 2020.

## **Peel's Comments on the Federal Discussion Paper: Proposed Integrated Management Approach to Plastic Products to Prevent Waste and Pollution**

The discussion paper identifies the following next steps towards achieving Zero Plastic Waste:

- Proposed addition of “plastic manufactured items” to Schedule 1 of the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999*;
- Manage single-use plastics by banning or restricting harmful items as early as 2021;
- Establishing minimum recycled content requirements; and
- Ensuring end of life responsibility by improving and expanding extended producer responsibility in Canada.

On October 22, 2020 Regional Council adopted a motion in support of the federal proposal to ban harmful single-use plastic items in 2021 and directed staff to submit comments by the deadline to Environment and Climate Change Canada (Resolution 2020-869).

### **2. Comments on the Proposed Integrated Management Approach to Plastic Products**

Staff reviewed the “Proposed Integrated Management Approach to Plastic Products to prevent Waste and Pollution” and participated in consultations related to the proposed approach prior to submitting comments to Environment and Climate Change Canada.

Staff is supportive of the proposed approach as it is a necessary step towards zero plastic waste and a circular economy and aligns with the objectives of Peel's long-term waste management strategy. Staff provided recommendations to support the following aspects of the proposed approach:

- Use of an evidence-based management framework to identify harmful plastic products.
- Bans of harmful single-use products including plastic checkout bags, stir sticks, six-pack rings, cutlery, straws, food service ware made from problematic plastics.
- Development of minimum recycled content targets.
- Consideration of a national extended producer responsibility framework.

Staff, however, does not support the consideration of compostable or biodegradable plastics as alternatives to single-use plastic products until proven composting technologies are available for such items and producer responsibility programs are in place for such items. Staff recommended the development of national standards for compostable and biodegradable products and the promotion of reusable or recyclable products as alternatives.

Comments on specific parts of the proposed integrated approach to the management of plastic products are included in Appendix I of this report.

Staff submitted the appended comments to Environment and Climate Change Canada by the deadline of December 9, 2020 with the provision that these were subject to Council approval.

## Peel's Comments on the Federal Discussion Paper: Proposed Integrated Management Approach to Plastic Products to Prevent Waste and Pollution

### RISK CONSIDERATIONS

The proposed approach on the management of plastics presents the following risk to Peel:

- Some compostable and biodegradable plastic products may not be compatible with Peel's organics processing systems and would end up as residue negating the benefits of the ban on single-use plastic items. Further, expanding the number of compostable and biodegradable products and packages in the marketplace could increase Peel's processing costs, contamination levels in both the green bin and blue box and decrease the value of Peel's compost. To mitigate these risks, staff will continue to engage with the federal government to advocate for national certification standards for compostable and biodegradable plastic products, and their end of life management.

### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no immediate financial implications resulting from this report.

### CONCLUSION

Staff reviewed the "Discussion Paper: Proposed Integrated Approach to Management of Plastic Products to Prevent Waste and Pollution" and submitted comments to Environment and Climate Change Canada by the December 9, 2020 deadline, with the provision that the comments were subject to Council endorsement.

Staff will continue to participate in federal consultations related to the reduction of plastic waste and provide updates to Regional Council.

### APPENDICES

Appendix I – Peel's Comments - Proposed Integrated Management Approach Submitted on December 8, 2020

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*For further information regarding this report, please contact Norman Lee, Director Waste Management, Ext. 4703, [norman.lee@peelregion.ca](mailto:norman.lee@peelregion.ca).*

#### ***Reviewed and/or approved in workflow by:***

Department Commissioner, Division Director and Financial Support Unit.

Final approval is by the Chief Administrative Officer.



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J. Baker, Chief Administrative Officer