



News Environment

Canada announces ban on single-use plastics in ‘historic step’

New regulations will prohibit sale and import of ‘harmful’ plastics, with some time for businesses to adjust.



A worker collects plastic bottles to sell at a dump site in Indonesia on May 31, 2022

[File: Chaideer Mahyuddin/AFP]

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The government of Canada announced that it will ban the manufacturing and import of a number of “harmful” [single-use plastics](#), with several new regulations coming into place in December.

The new rules, announced Monday, will apply to checkout bags, utensils, food-service products with plastic that is difficult to recycle, ring carriers, stir sticks, and straws with some exceptions, the government announced in a release.

“Our government is all in when it comes to reducing [plastic pollution](#) ... That’s why we’re announcing today that our government is delivering on its commitment to ban harmful single-use plastics,” said environment minister Steven Guilbeault in a press conference Monday.

“This is a historic step towards beating plastic pollution and keeping our communities, lands and oceans clean.”

The sale of such items will be [prohibited](#) starting in December 2023, a buffer period meant to give businesses time to adjust to the changes and wind down their existing supplies.

The government will also ban the export of six plastics by the end of 2025.

The federal government listed plastics as toxic under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act last year, which paved the way for regulations to ban some. However, a consortium of plastics producers is suing the government over the toxic designation in a case expected to be heard later this year.

Canada uses 15 billion plastic checkout bags per year, and 16 million straws per day, the government said.

A recent report by the UN has said that the global use of [plastics](#) is expected to triple by 2060, and the annual production of fossil fuel-based plastics set to hit more than 1.2 billion tonnes by the same year. The waste created by such levels of production would be more than 1 billion tonnes per year.

Such reports have contributed to a growing sense of concern around the globe regarding the prevalence of plastics and the problems they cause for pollution and [the environment](#).

In the last 70 years, the world has produced about 8.3 billion tonnes of plastic, 60 percent of which has [been discarded](#) in landfills, oceans, and rivers, or burned.

Some manufacturing groups in Canada had previously expressed their opposition to the proposed regulations, despite pledges by the government to give businesses time to adjust. Conservative groups, such as the Montreal Economic Institute (MEI), have said the regulations harm “potential innovations” in the plastics industry and “will hurt the economy without any guarantee of helping the environment”. At least six percent of MEI’s funding comes from the oil and gas industry.

The Canadian government has said that it “consulted widely to seek input to inform the development of the proposed Regulations, and heard that businesses needed guidance on switching to available alternative products and systems”.

SOURCE: AL JAZEERA AND NEWS AGENCIES

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