

Banning single use shopping bags in Nanaimo “as soon as possible”: One year later

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December 11, 2017

November 26, 2018

A year ago, Nanaimo councillors voted unanimously:

“Mayor and Council of the City of Nanaimo wish to ban the use of plastic bags by retailers in the City of Nanaimo to the extent permitted by law and direct Staff to report back to Council with options as soon as possible”.

Councilors comments prior to the vote:

- “Let’s be a leader, let’s do this”
- “It is time to be more forward; enough is enough”
- “The sooner we can ban plastic bags in Nanaimo, the better our city will be”
- I am interested in the future: everyone has kids and grandkids...”
- “Time to take a bold move and show leadership...”
- “Let’s just lead and others will follow”

Subsequent comments from city staff:

- “Other issues more important”
- “...were waiting for court decision” (City of Victoria)
- “Short on staff (staff on leave, etc) and resources”
- “Important but not a priority at this time”
- “...looking into sometime next year to start consultation”
- “More likely a two year timeline for implementation”

What happened since December 2017.

In Nanaimo:

- City staff sought legal advice on (date?).
- An in-camera report was produced and presented to council on June 11.
- November 26, report presented to council.

What happen since December 2017 (Cont'd).

Other places:

- June 19, Supreme Court (BC) ruled in favor of Victoria vs CPBA
- July 1, City of Victoria implements single use bag ban
- September 13, UBCM called (5th time) on the provincial government to develop strategies to reduce packaging in BC.
- Last month, the European parliament voted for a ban on a wide range of single use plastic (including plastic bags).
- March 1, 2019, Parksville will implement a ban (postponed).
- Fall 2019, Vancouver will become the first major Canadian city to ban plastic drinking straws.

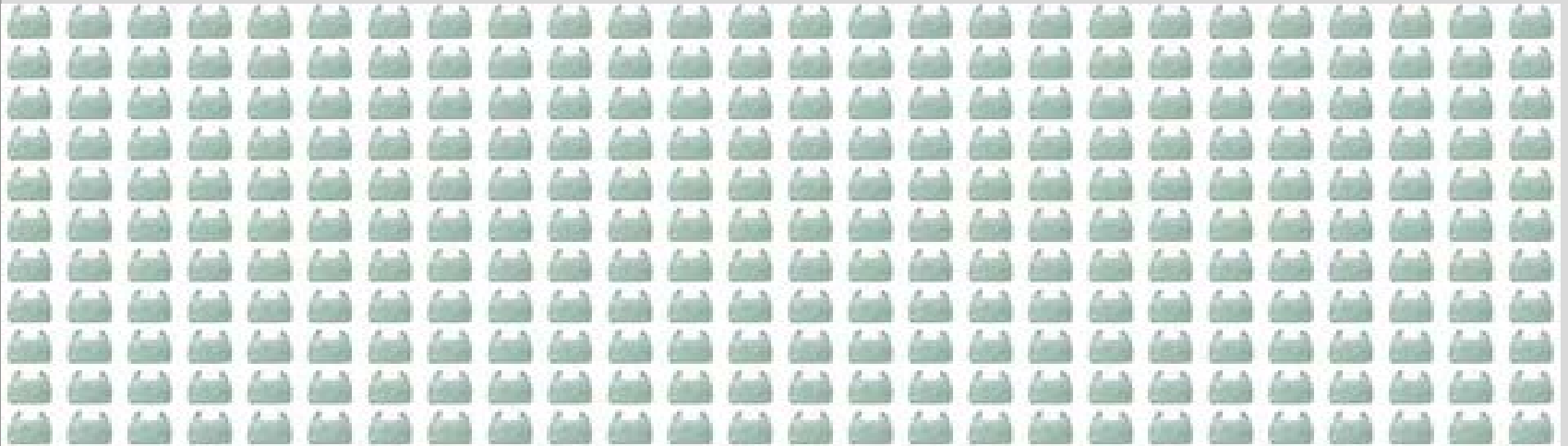
A review of what was presented to council a year ago.



<https://www.readingreadingchamber.org/plastic-bag-ban-effective-in-september/>

Background

Canadians use more than 3 billion plastic bags per year (2018). That's more than 200 bags/person/year.

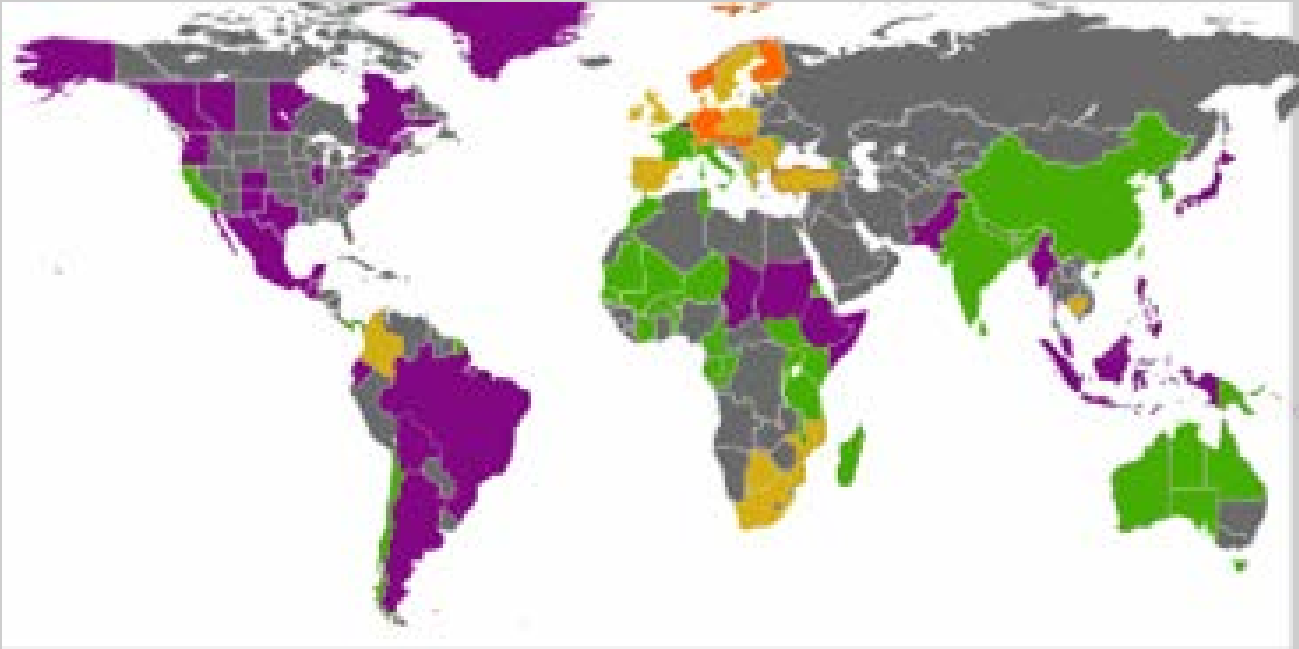


Each icon represents **10 million bags**

Background cont'd

- Eight Canadian cities have banned plastic bags (two this year).
- PEI will ban plastic bags as of July 1st, 2019.
- Other countries with a ban, partial ban, tax, or levy:
Denmark, Ireland, Wales, Scotland, Italy, Germany, England, USA, Mexico, Brazil, Australia, Africa, China, Bangladesh, France, Belgium, Chile, Mexico, etc
- Many cities in BC, including on Vancouver Island, are currently discussing banning single use bags.

Taxes or bans on single use bags worldwide



■ Banned ■ A charge (levy) ■ Voluntary charge ■ Partial charge or ban (municipal or regional levels)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phase-out_of_lightweight_plastic_bags

Why recycling doesn't solve the problem

- Only 5% of single-use plastic bags are recycled in the U.S.
- Take > 300 years to “biodegrade” into toxic particles, contaminate soil & water.
- Paper vs plastic: Making paper bags require 5x more water, 3x more greenhouse gas than plastic bags.

In Canada

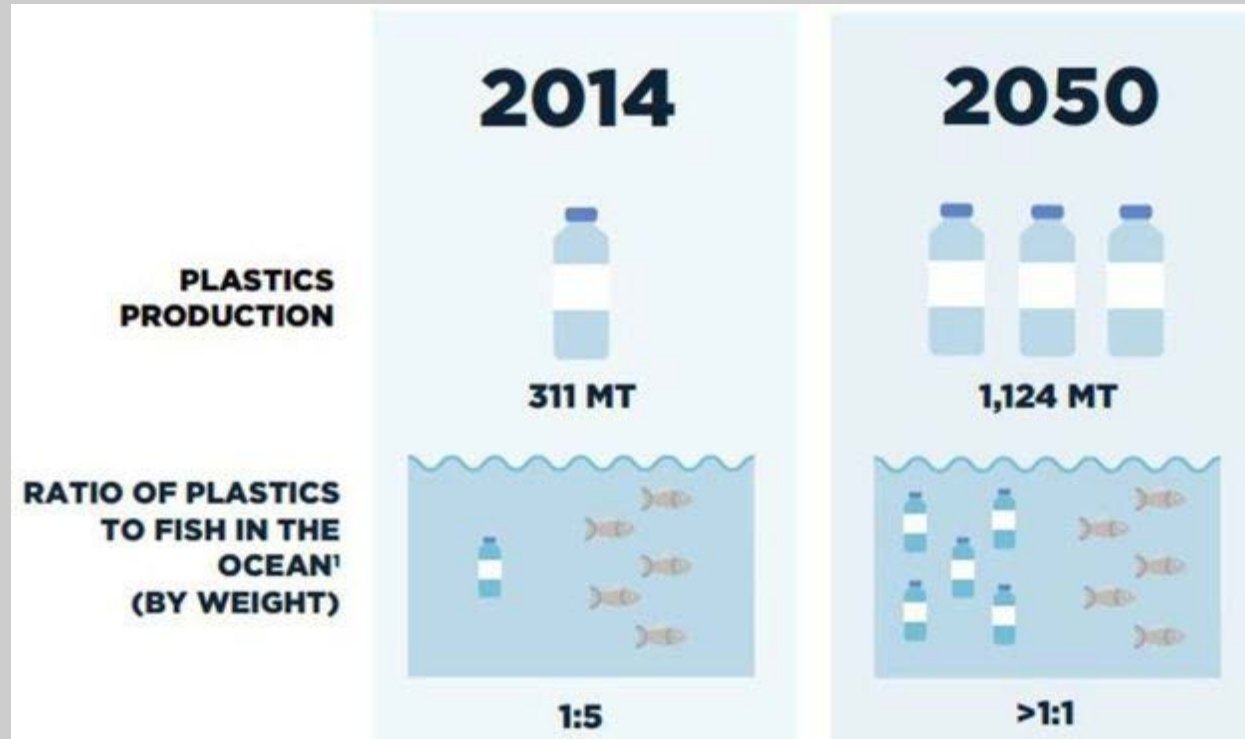
From Environmental Defence Group (Canada):

- Less than 11% of all plastics are recycled in Canada.
- 90% of plastics end up incinerated or in our landfills, lakes, parks and oceans.
- Once in the environment, plastic waste contaminates ecosystems, kills wildlife, and leaches toxic chemicals.

Plastic bags around the world

- Worldwide we use 5 trillions bags per year.
- We dump 8.8 million tons of plastic into the ocean every year (and that number is increasing).
- 700 marine species are in danger of extinction because of plastic.

Scientists predict that by 2050 there will be more plastic in the oceans than fish.



Plastic bags and Nanaimo

Last year, retail stores in Nanaimo gave away ~ 46 000 bags per day.

On April 22 (Earth Day) some grocery and retail stores took it upon themselves to start charging for paper and plastic bags. While some stores are placing a levy on bags, others are not, making it unfair: some consumers will only frequent stores that give bags for free.

Plastic bags and the environment





<https://www.switchmed.eu/en/news/news-1/israel-halves-plastic-bag-waste-in-the-sea-one-year-after-new-law-on-supermarket-distribution>



<https://www.reusethisbag.com/articles/plastic-shopping-bags-environmental-impact/>



<https://www.britannica.com/story/plastic-disaster-how-your-bags-bottles-and-body-wash-pollute-the-oceans>



<http://www.ecoschools.global/news-stories/2017/3/31/eco-schools-in-bahamas-engaging-young-people-to-reduce-plastic-pollution-in-landfills-the-ocean>







<https://www.factorydirectpromos.com/blog/how-plastic-bag-use-impacts-wildlife/>



<https://thetruthaboutplasticb>







<http://www.ronmartin.net/blog>



<http://www.ronmartin.net/blog/wp-content/uploads/2006/06/>



<http://oceancrusaders.org/plastic-oceans-plastic-in-our-playground-part-1-plastic-bags/>

Nanaimo Landfill







Where do all those plastic bags go?

Micro plastic and human health:

Plastics (bags) will eventually break down. Because they are non-organic (polyethylene), plastics will never disappear.

They will change into smaller and smaller particles until they are no longer visible; but they are still there. They will enter the food chain (long term health effects are still being studied).

Micro plastic



<https://plasticchange.org/our-documentation/microplastic/>



<http://www.scubaverse.com/government-backs-student-microplastic-survey/>



<https://www.stuff.co.nz/environment/96833213/Auckland-drinking-water-not-yet-tested-for-microplastic-pollution>

No need to reinvent the wheel

Montreal single use bag bylaw

VILLE DE MONTRÉAL BY-LAW 16-051

BY-LAW PROHIBITING THE DISTRIBUTION OF CERTAIN SHOPPING BAGS IN RETAIL STORES

In view of sections 6 and 19 of the Municipal Powers Act (CQLR, chapter C-47.1); In view of sections 369 and 411 of the Cities and Towns Act (CQLR, chapter C-19); At its meeting of August 22, 2016, city council enacts:

SECTION I

PRELIMINARY PROVISIONS

1. The object of this by-law is to ban the distribution of certain shopping bags made of traditional, oxo-degradable or biodegradable plastic in the retail stores located on the city's territory in order to encourage a change of behaviour regarding the use of these types of bags and thus reduce their environmental impact.

Victoria single use bag bylaw

CHECKOUT BAG REGULATION BYLAW A BYLAW OF THE CITY OF VICTORIA

The purpose of this Bylaw is to regulate the business use of single use checkout bags to reduce the creation of waste and associated municipal costs, to better steward municipal property, including sewers, streets and parks, and to promote responsible and sustainable business practices that are consistent with the values of the community.

Contents

- 1 Title
- 2 Definitions
- 3 Checkout Bag Regulations
- 4 Exemptions
- 5 Offences
- 6 Penalties
- 7 Severability

<https://www.victoria.ca/assets/Departments/Legislative~Services/Documents/18-008%20Checkout%20Bag%20Bylaw.pdf>

Where we are now

A year later, very little has been done in Nanaimo to ban single use bags (not a priority) despite the fact the councilors voted unanimously to implement a ban as soon as possible.

Every day plastic bags are produced, shipped, distributed and discarded.

Where we are now (cont'd)

Since the presentation last December, even with some stores charging for bags, more than **9.5 million plastic bags** have been given away in Nanaimo alone (about 9 million of those were simply thrown away).

(December 11 - April 22 = $130 \times 46\,000 = 5\,800\,000$ + April 23 - November 26 = $210 \times 18\,000 = 3\,780\,000$ + 3 780 000 = 9 500 000)

What's next?

Nanaimo could be a leader in the fight against plastic pollution.

- Implement a ban on all single use bags, starting **January 1st, 2019.**
- Give retailers a 6 month transition period with an enforced ban effective **July 1st, 2019.**
- Or more consultations, reports, and wait and see...

Where there's a will, there's a way.

Thank you.



Neck Point, Nanaimo.