



Feb 13th, 2024

Attention:
Tracey Spack
Federal Plastics Registry
Plastics Regulatory Affairs Division
Environment and Climate Change Canada
351 Saint-Joseph Boulevard
Gatineau, Quebec K1A 0H3
plastiques-plastics@ec.gc.ca

Dear Director Tracey Spack,

Thank you for all the work you have done to date to move towards Zero Waste and a Circular Economy, and for the opportunity to comment on the notice to require reporting for the plastics registry.

Zero Waste BC is a non-profit association dedicated to driving systemic change towards Zero Waste in BC. Zero Waste Canada is a non-profit grassroots organization, dedicated to ending our age of wastefulness through improved industrial design and education. Zero Waste is defined as the “conservation of all resources by means of responsible production, consumption, reuse, and recovery of products, packaging, and materials without burning and with no discharges to land, water, or air that threaten the environment or human health”. Our current resource consumption system is a linear take-make-waste system. Linear resource consumption systems create waste and other forms of pollution, deplete resources, change land uses, and diminish biodiversity by design. They also generate a huge amount of greenhouse gases which constitutes just some of the discharges that threaten the economy, human health, and the environment. Here is the link to the updated [Zero Waste Hierarchy](#) which should be followed when developing waste solutions.

We are very concerned about plastics given the environmental and health impacts and the rapid rise of the amount of plastics put on the market. We are pleased that the EEEEC has been responsive to the strong demand from Canadians to move towards Zero Waste, and in particular Zero Plastic Waste. We also appreciate that many items we flagged in our feedback on the technical paper for the Federal Plastics Registry has been included in this notice. Our intention for this feedback is that it will assist in the redesign of our systems for a future where waste does not threaten the economy, human health and the environment.

Sincerely
Sue Maxwell
Chair, Zero Waste BC

Jamie Kaminski
Zero Waste Canada



Our feedback is general support for the direction but have called out some key points to strengthen and develop the reporting to the Plastics Registry:

Schedule 1 Plastic products

Part 1

Is there a need to include a category for other in case there are plastics that do not fall under these other types?

Part 2

There are four classifications of virgin resins noted here. Two are for biodegradable types however the term *biodegradable* is not defined in Schedule 2 and in common use, every material eventually breaks down in the environment and so the term *biodegradable* is meaningless. The term *compostable* is defined however but could be stronger. It should only be used for plastics sourced from bio-based materials and that match the definition for the strongest certification programs (as in it should break down in the systems that are widely available, not under special lab conditions that are not found commonly across Canada. Composting of fossil-fuel based plastics should not be supported.

With that in mind, we propose these edits:

- (1) Virgin fossil-based conventional resin
- ~~(2) Virgin fossil-based biodegradable resin~~
- (23) Virgin bio-based conventional resin
- (34) Virgin bio-based compostable resin
- (4 5) Post-consumer recycled resin

Part 3

Categories

We appreciate the comprehensive nature of the proposed categorizations. For some, it may make sense to add another category to ensure the comprehensive nature of the data collection. For example, category 3 -many items are being electrified that may not have been in the past (such as greeting cards, sneakers, etc); category 4 and 5 -to ensure all forms of transport that are popping up are included such as electric skateboards, etc. Definitions should make it clear that motorized includes both fossil fuel and electric motors. Under category 10, either mattresses, box springs, foundations and furniture should be added or it should be made clear if interior textiles include this (note a reference to the List of Tariff Provisions can be made but the definition should also be included in this notice). One category that is missing is household and business goods which would be all of the more durable plastics products that are not electric and to date have limited or no EPR programs, yet make up a significant portion of products on the market. These should be added, but reporting requirements could start after 2026. Additionally packaging and products sold business-to-business should be reported, not just products and packaging sold to the end consumer. Any importers should also report

plastics packaging and products that come into the country, not just that sold to the end consumer. The categories also need to include plastic resins as its own category for reporting. Unsold products sent for destruction and duty drawbacks should be included. The ultimate goal should be to capture all of the plastic going into and circulating in the market, whether it is part of an existing EPR program or not.

Schedule 2 Definitions

Energy recovery - How is net heating value calculated? -by potential heating value based on average material composition or by actual energy out/kg of waste burned? We support the calculation based on the latter but this can only be done with regular, frequent, comprehensive, non-biased waste composition studies.

As noted above, ensure motorized categories include both combustion and electric motors

Recycling -chemical or thermal processes -we recommend these unproven processes are not included as recycling. They are usually experimental and very resource-intensive to do in terms of chemical and energy inputs relative to the actual monomer outputs. If this category is to be included for data collection, they should have their own definition as *chemical/thermal processing to monomers* with very strict requirements for what can count as actual material recovery and consider the actual kg output materials that are used (not that can be used theoretically).

Reusable packaging – we appreciate the inclusion of this category and definition of reusable with the sole caveat that the phrase *as many uses as possible* can be open to interpretation. Many argue that even standard plastic shopping bags get reused so this should be tightened up. We support the caveat requiring a system of reuse being in place.

Schedule 3 - Criteria for reporting

It is unclear in section 2 what parties will be required to report. Is it only intended for materials collected under EPR, waste management collectors and local governments or does it include intermediaries such as repair shops, thrift shops, etc.? We assume the former but it is only clarified when considering the definition of diversion which refers to a whole separate document. Recommend adding in language to clarify this. Clarification on definitions for who is collecting and what *is* considered collection will assist.

The criteria note that a producers of plastics products need to report but this needs to be clearly stated that it also includes producers of plastic resins.

Section 2 -The term diversion is problematic. Zero Waste BC does not support the inclusion of energy recovery as diversion. Our [recent research](#) shows that waste to energy is the most expensive and GHG-intensive form of waste management, while having significant opportunity costs. We support the use of the [Zero Waste Hierarchy](#) which classifies waste to energy as unacceptable. We support gathering the data for all pathways materials may flow while also

considering that some may understand this document to be directional in terms of preferred pathways.

With that in mind we suggest this:

2) A person who is a provider of another service that manages plastics or plastic products after collection ~~for diversion~~

(a) for arranging direct reuse;

(b) for repair;

(c) for refurbishing;

(d) for remanufacturing;

(e) for recycling;

(f) for composting;

(g) for processing into chemicals (not intended as fuel);

~~(h) for using for energy recovery;~~

(i) for processing for final disposal or incineration with or without energy recovery; (note this would include chemical processing to fuel, creation of RDF and any processes that destroy the materials for use as energy)

(j) for landfilling.

While we agree with the concept of gathering all of the information, note that it will be very hard for reusers, refurbishers, remanufacturers, repairers and possibly composting processors to know the plastic components/amounts of certain products. This should be part of what PROs and EPR programs should develop calculations for but will be beyond the scope of what a local government will know. To support reporting by non-PRO/EPR agents, calculators may be needed to determine the portion of plastics in key product categories made from mixed materials.

Schedule 4 - Information to report

Note that designating a PRO to report will make it easier for the producer but distances them from the considerations of where the materials go. It may also result in the use of aggregated data rather than information specific to a producer. For example, will the plastics reported for dishwashers use an average of all producer's dishwashers or would each producer need to understand the materials in their products and possibly then compare those to the best in class products. To date, limited design change has resulted from EPR programs in part due to this disconnection and lack of specific feedback between PROs and their producers. Future processes and communications should consider this.

Category 6 is defined in Schedule 1, Part 3 and yet no reporting requirements are made. Recommend adding the requirement for reporting on this category for 2026 for the information specified in Schedule 4, Sections 1 through 6, and Section 7, subsections (a) through (d), and (p),

In addition Part 1 (7) notes reporting is only required for materials going to the residential and ICI waste streams. We recommend it apply to construction and demolition waste streams as well and considers the packaging of these materials.

Part 1 (7)

Again as noted, we support the use of the Zero Waste Hierarchy and do not consider energy recovery and chemicals to fuel as diversion. We are assuming that all reporting for the final destination of material is based on collection of separated plastics, packaging or product streams (not general mixed municipal solid waste or garbage). Our suggestion for parts e-o is:
Diversion

(e) the total quantity in tonnes of plastic collected at end of life ~~and sent for diversion~~;

(f) the total quantity in tonnes of collected ~~diverted~~ plastic in products that is collected with direct reuse arranged (Note: this should be the total of material actually reused, not just with reuse potential);

(g) the total quantity in tonnes of collected ~~diverted~~ plastic in products that are repaired;

(h) the total quantity in tonnes of collected ~~diverted~~ plastic in products that are refurbished;

(i) the total quantity in tonnes of collected ~~diverted~~ plastic in products that is remanufactured;

(j) the total quantity in tonnes of collected ~~diverted~~ plastics that are recycled;

(k) the total quantity in tonnes of collected ~~diverted~~ bio-based certified compostable-plastics that are ~~sent to final disposal and~~ composted;

(l) the total quantity in tonnes of collected ~~diverted~~ non-bio-based plastics that are ~~sent to final disposal and~~ composted; (note this is to understand the flows, not support this process)

(m) the total quantity in tonnes of collected ~~diverted~~ plastics that are processed into chemical monomers to be used as materials, (this does not include use as fuels;)

Disposal

(n) the total quantity in tonnes of collected ~~diverted~~ plastics that are sent to final disposal at a landfill;

(o) the total quantity in tonnes of collected ~~diverted~~ plastics that are sent to final disposal and incinerated with or without energy recovery; (this includes chemicals processed to fuel and the creation of resource derived fuel); and... (Note clarification is needed to ensure plastics sent to cement kilns are included as a subcategory).

For all plastics, including those heading to the compost streams, we recommend additional reporting on the classes of intentionally-added chemicals used to understand the possible contamination levels of the finished product. Such classes must include: bisphenols, PFAS, brominated flame retardants, fillers, colourants and phthalates.

The only area that remains unclear is how the reporting of plastic exports will be reported, especially as there may be no way to verify the final use of the material. Given the international concern around waste exports of any kind, it would make sense to also gather data on exports, especially to countries that are not signatories to the Basel convention and the plastic waste amendment. Imports and exports should be subcategories for the appropriate categories in Schedule 4(7).

Schedule 5 -Phases

We support the phased in schedule with the addition of information for the construction packaging and materials entering the market.

Finally we support full data transparency on what is reported.