

Ministry of the Environment,  
Conservation and Parks

Ministère de l'Environnement,  
de la Protection de la nature et des  
Parcs



Office of the Minister

Bureau du ministre

777 Bay Street, 5th Floor  
Toronto ON M7A 2J3  
Tel.: 416-314-6790

777, rue Bay, 5<sup>e</sup> étage  
Toronto (Ontario) M7A 2J3  
Tél. : 416.314.6790

357-2022-62

February 1, 2022

Ms. Marg Esaw  
President

The Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) – Markham/Unionville  
c/o Email: [jemiles77@gmail.com](mailto:jemiles77@gmail.com)

Dear Ms. Esaw:

I am writing in response to your recent letter to Minister Calandra regarding the *Single-Use Plastic Ban Act, 2019* and your ideas for how Ontario can reduce our dependence on single-use plastics and mitigate their environmental impact.

The private member's bill to amend the *Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, 2016* to address single-use plastics through their eventual elimination was introduced and first reading carried on March 18, 2019. You can continue to track the status of the bill at [www.ola.org](http://www.ola.org).

I share your concern about the issue of plastic waste and pollution. Our government is committed to real actions to reduce the amount of waste that is sent to landfills or becomes litter where they can harm our natural environment and marine wildlife. Ontario's approach to the plastic problem focuses on increasing the recovery and recycling of plastics through producer responsibility and non-regulatory measures, including public education and efforts to reduce and clean up litter.

The ministry has accomplished a number of initiatives to improve Ontario's waste management framework over the last year. A key action currently underway involves transitioning the residential Blue Box Program to full producer responsibility, which will transfer the operation and costs of the Blue Box Program from municipalities to the producers of products and packaging that go into the Blue Box. We believe making producers responsible for the end-of-life management of their products provides them with an incentive to reduce packaging and improve packaging design. It also gives them the flexibility to find innovative and efficient ways to improve recycling.

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In particular, the Blue Box regulation sets diversion targets that are some of the highest in North America. These enforceable targets will drive collection from more sources while helping reduce litter.

The ministry knows consumers are looking for more sustainable alternatives to single-use plastics such as compostable products and packaging. That is why we are working with the federal government, compostable product manufacturers, processing facilities, municipalities, and standard setting and certification bodies to actively conduct pilot testing of compostable products and packaging in Ontario organic waste processing facilities to see how these materials break down. We are also working with the federal government and others to look at standards so that these emerging and innovative materials that may replace single-use plastics can be managed appropriately.

At the national level, Ontario continues to collaborate with its federal, provincial and territorial partners through the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME) to implement the Zero Plastic Waste Action Plan, a comprehensive action plan to implement the Canada-wide Strategy on Zero Plastic. We are also working with the federal government through CCME to develop guidance for the use of labels and terms such as recyclable, compostable and biodegradable in order to facilitate a common understanding and better inform purchasing, recycling or disposing of these products. The guidance will assist jurisdictions and those that manage waste on how to communicate to consumers and how these products should be properly managed at their end of life.

Your letter mentions the need for increased public education as a key step in reducing plastic waste and pollution. I want to let you know that Ontario has established an official Provincial Day of Action on Litter. The Day of Action goes beyond encouraging litter cleanups – it is an annual event to bring attention to the impact waste and litter has on our environment, and what we can do to stop it every day of the year. The Provincial Day of Action on Litter is officially recognized in the province on the second Tuesday of May each year.

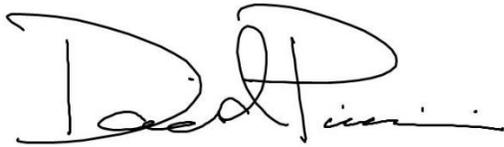
COVID-19 has shown the importance of plastic products in our daily lives, in the medical community and preventing the spread of infections. Given the benefits, it is important that we responsibly manage plastics to allow their beneficial uses while minimizing risks to the environment.

If you have any further questions please feel free to contact Charles O'Hara, Director of the ministry's Resource Recovery and Policy Branch, at 647-202-7719 or by email at [Charles.O'Hara@ontario.ca](mailto:Charles.O'Hara@ontario.ca).

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Thank you sharing your ideas with us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Piccini'. The signature is stylized with a large 'D' and 'P'.

David Piccini  
Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks

c: The Honourable Paul Calandra  
Minister of Legislative Affairs and Long-Term Care

The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier

The Honourable. Nina Tangri  
Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction

The Honourable. Victor Fedeli  
Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade

Ms. Andrea Horwath, MPP, Hamilton-Centre

Mr. Chris Glover, MPP, Spadina—Fort York

Ms. Sandy Shaw, MPP, Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas

Mr. Peter Tabuns, MPP, Toronto—Danforth

Mr. Charles O'Hara, Director, Resource Recovery Policy Branch, MECP