



AHOI Challenge: Circular Economy Commitments

It is estimated that globally, about 8 million tonnes of plastic waste enters the oceans every year. Plastic Waste harms wildlife, destroys habitats and fisheries, contaminates the food chain, and poses risks to our health and coastal communities.

[Canada set a target to reduce 50% of total waste by 2040](#) which includes plastics. As a G7 country, we signed onto a global commitment to eliminate plastic waste by moving towards 100% reusable, recyclable, or recoverable plastics by 2030. To reach these targets and for the health of our communities and our environment, immediate action is necessary from all levels of government, businesses and individuals.

In [Newfoundland and Labrador, the province has set a target to reduce 50% of total waste by 2025](#). This will require tackling sources of waste from disposable plastics, organic matter, and focusing on reusable and efficient waste-separation systems.

The following commitments are designed as targets that we can all work towards. These actionable items are listed based on the research conducted by AHOI within the Gros Morne region.

I/We, the undersigned, on this date _____, commit to taking the following actions by the end of 2025.

Name: _____

Signature(s): _____

TOWNS - We, _____, as a town, commit to...

- Review, update or create a municipal or regional waste management plan and policies that will encourage and support residents, businesses, and organizations to eliminate single-use plastics and identify efficient and effective ways to reduce total waste generation by 50% before 2030.
- Ban the use of single-use plastic foodware (cutlery, styrofoam, straws, condiment packets, etc.) and/or decorations (balloons, plastic flags, etc.) at organised events taking place in public venues (churches, town halls, community centres, etc).
- Encourage or provide incentives for people renting town halls and other public facilities or running town programs like camps and sporting events to reduce their waste generation by using only backyard compostable or reusable items.
- Avoid or ban unnecessary single-use plastic “giveaways” including wrapped candies and plastic token toys at all public events, including celebrations, parades, festivals, etc.
- Avoid or ban plastic lawn ornaments, signage and flowers on gravesites to minimize or eliminate plastic pollution from entering our environment.
- Work with the province and waste haulers to improve enforcement and policy compliance to reduce illegal waste disposal and ensure residents and businesses are effectively disposing of their waste and recyclables in the designated drop-off facilities.
- Work with region and waste management agencies to create signage and educational outreach material that will improve public knowledge on plastic pollution impacts to our health and the environment.
- Work with our region to develop programs, outreach material and info sessions that will promote local composting programs and identify where community members can locate community composting sites, or implement their own backyard composting.
- Place labelled recycling, waste and compostable bins in public spaces where a rinse station can be made available to improve the recyclability and proper waste disposal.
- Create incentives or rewards that will encourage businesses to reduce the sale and distribution of single-use plastics and increase the use of compostable, reusable or refillable alternatives.
- Promote or provide incentives that encourage the public to use their own reusable containers at public events or for food take out.
- Work with the region and local fish harvesters to identify problematic plastic waste entering our ocean and develop programs to mitigate or eliminate this issue.

BUSINESSES - We, _____, as a business, commit to...

- Market and encourage customers to bring in their own reusable containers and cups for their take out orders and leftovers.
- Reduce the use and sales of single-use plastic water bottles by signing up to the [BlueW](#) program to offer and promote fresh, clean and free drinking water to the public and your customers.
- Avoid the purchase or sale of disposable plastic not labelled with a #1-5.
- Participate in and promote the *Recycle on the Rock* program to increase the reuse and effective recycling of plastic bottle caps, bread tags, and coffee lids.
- Purchase supplies, including containers, cups and other foodware in bulk to avoid excess shipping emissions and plastic packaging.
- Eliminate the use of plastic clamshells and styrofoam containers at our establishment and offer take-away meals in disposable food containers only if they are backyard compostable.
- Eliminate plastic cutlery, including forks, knives, spoons, and straws from our establishment and offer reusables or backyard compostable alternatives.
- Offer take-away meals or drinks in reusable containers (i.e mason jars) whenever it is feasible.
- Replace single-serve condiment packets by using refillable containers instead.
- Provide condiments for take out orders upon request, or provide a self-serve condiment stand offering paper-based portion cups that can be filled from bulk containers.
- Ensure compostable products offered are labelled with their true biodegradability to help customers know how to properly dispose of their products (whether it is safe for their backyard compost or not).
- Source food supplies from local growers and support local producers.
- Collect organic material generated at our establishment and ensure it is composted.
- Work with the town to clearly label our bins for separating recycling, compost, and garbage, using messaging that is consistent with public waste disposal bins.
- Reach out to my municipality, other businesses, and AHOI to learn more about programs and supports available to help reduce our businesses' waste footprint.

INDIVIDUALS - I, _____, as an individual, commit to ...

- Avoid purchasing single-use products, especially plastics that are not labelled with a #1-5.
- Empty and rinse all of my recyclable containers labelled #1-5, including all food containers and place them in a clearly labelled blue bag.
- Support local farmers markets.
- Purchase unpackaged fresh produce over packaged goods as often as possible, and use reusable produce bags and containers
- Purchase items in bulk to avoid excess packaging.
- Avoid single-use plastic water bottles by choosing to drink fresh, clean tap water in reusable cups or bottles.
- Refill my reusable water bottle when I am in need of water in public settings, rather than purchasing bottled water, especially where [BlueW](#) programs are available.
- Avoid disposable coffee cups by bringing my reusable travel mug to order hot beverages to go.
- Bring my own container to restaurants when I want to order take-out or bring home leftovers.
- Say no to plastic cutlery and condiment packs when picking up take-out at food establishments.
- Say no to plastic straws at food establishments and bars, and bring your own reusables.
- Return or donate all of my beverage containers to the Green Depot or other collection sites, to be recycled through the beverage container refund program.
- Bring my plastic bottle caps, bread tags and coffee cup lids to a *Recycle on the Rock* bin.
- Choose real or biodegradable flowers over plastic flowers, especially for occasions and on graves, to prevent unintentional litter to my local environment.
- Participate in composting programs with my community or in my backyard.
- Avoid plastic tampon applicators, and hygiene products that come in plastic bottles.
- Reduce my impact on the environment during outdoor overnight trips, by packing biodegradable, unpackaged hygiene products, or refilling reusable toiletry containers with biodegradable products I have at home.
- Use unpackaged hygiene products or refillable containers to carry toiletries when I am traveling, to avoid the use of single-use plastics.