

Proposal to Ban Single-Use Plastics and Reduce Local Pollution



AHOI

REPORT PREPARED BY:

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REPORT PRESENTED TO:

Mayor _____ and the Town Council of _____

Issue

Plastic pollution and litter are rapidly accumulating along our coastlines. Continuing the sale, distribution, and use of single-use plastics (SUPs) in combination with improper waste disposal contributes significantly to marine debris and beach litter. Disposable plastics often break down along with trillions of other smaller pieces which marine life ingest and become entangled in. The impacts of plastic particles in our marine ecosystem threaten commercial and recreational fisheries, along with our food consumption. In addition, coastal tourism is a sector most impacted by marine pollution yet, it is one of the biggest contributors. Communities of Gros Morne may adopt any of the recommendations full or in part by AHOI and consider the sustainable alternatives to SUP and plastic packaging to reduce local pollution.

Background

The Atlantic Healthy Oceans Initiative (AHOI) is working with local tourism operators and representatives of the town to develop solutions for reducing plastic pollution which enhances the social, ecological, and economic values of the region. The solutions proposed in this report are based on the federal government's Zero Plastic Waste Strategy, which includes an action plan that each province in Canada is working towards, including Newfoundland. Canada hopes to finalize the regulations for a ban on SUP by the end of 2021. AHOI received funding through the Zero Plastic Waste Initiative by Environment and Climate Change Canada to help this transition along by preparing communities and tackling plastic pollution locally. The timeline for AHOI's Plastic Waste Free Project began with baseline data collection to develop an implementation plan for different programs designed to ease the transition into a plastic-waste-free community. Incorporating a reusable bag share program through 'Boomerang Bag' and a reusable water refill program through 'Blue W' are programs that AHOI is developing in collaboration with local businesses, schools, Parks Canada, and the Town Councils. Already, several water refill locations have been added to the Blue W map for our region here: <http://www.bluew.org/>. In addition, AHOI has collaborated with these groups to implement a sustainable take-out program with the support of the Gros Morne Cooperating Association to ensure food takeaway is only available in reusable or compostable containers, not SUP. Already, 10 tourism operators in the region have partnered with AHOI and made the switch to more sustainable take-out options. Conducting beach clean-ups with local volunteers has allowed AHOI to determine common sources of litter. During one of our local beach clean ups, we found approximately 31,000 pieces of litter were collected. Most of the items collected on this beach were from food packaging and SUP, which can be attributed to aspects of local tourism. Embracing sustainability in all aspects of tourism by applying policies to reduce litter and prevent pollution adds value to local business operators and is a way to make the Town of _____ a champion towards a plastic-waste-free Gros Morne.

Recommendation

AHOI, with support from the community, recommends that the Town Council of _____ accepts 'Option #1'; that the Town Council of _____ take action to limit waste generation, embrace sustainable alternatives, and adopt the proposed Bylaw, "Ban Single-Use Plastics and Reduce

Pollution". The *Municipalities Act, 1999* authorizes individual councils to make regulations that respect the *Environmental Protection Act, 2002*, and the prevention of litter. Implementing a Bylaw is the most effective way to inspire local change towards reducing plastic pollution because it allows for economic disincentives, and creates consistency for all businesses and local events to eliminate SUP.

Be it resolved that the Town Council of _____ takes action to limit waste generation, embrace sustainable alternatives, and adopt the proposed Bylaw, "Ban Single-Use Plastics and Reduce Pollution". **See attachments.**

Options:

1. That the Town Council of _____ takes action to limit waste generation, embrace sustainable alternatives, and adopt the proposed Bylaw, "Ban Single-Use Plastics and Reduce Pollution".
2. That the Town Council of _____ does NOT take action to limit waste generation, embrace sustainable alternatives, and adopt the proposed Bylaw, "Ban Single-Use Plastics and Reduce Pollution".
3. That the Town Council of _____ develops alternative solutions.

Jurisdictional Comparison

As a coastal community driven by tourism, the Town of _____ can look to similar jurisdictions in Canada that have taken action to reduce plastic waste. In 2019, Nova Scotia implemented new legislation to ban plastic bags and allow for additional policies to regulate SUPs, which is exactly what Newfoundland has done. However, the Town of Lunenburg in Nova Scotia is campaigning for a Plastic Free Lunenburg with a proposed Bylaw to ban all other forms of SUP. AHOI is modeling its plastic-waste-free strategy after some programs in the Town of Lunenburg, which are comparable to the Town of _____ as both are small Atlantic communities associated with a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The District of Tofino, a coastal community supported by tourism, is another great example of a local commitment to reducing plastic pollution. While British Columbia works towards a province-wide ban on SUP, municipalities, like the District of Tofino, are stepping up with their own Bylaws to ban plastic straws and bags as a way to promote sustainable tourism and a healthy environment for residents. By reviewing Bylaws in other municipalities, AHOI developed appropriate prohibitions and exemptions for the proposed Bylaw for the Town of _____. Recognizing the importance of incorporating sustainability into the tourism sector is beneficial to the Town of _____ and the livelihoods of the community.

Financial Implications

During the summer months of May-August when tourism is at its peak, each of the towns in Gros Morne generate most of their waste for collection, which costs \$164/lb in the Western Region of Newfoundland, as reflected in municipal taxes. For example, in the summer months of 2019, Norris Point paid on average, \$2,176 for 13,251kg of waste collected per month. The Solid Waste

Management Strategy for Newfoundland aims to reduce total waste collected by 50% by 2025. By eliminating SUP from the waste stream, the Town of _____ can reduce the burden of waste collection and its associated costs significantly. AHOI is already working closely with local businesses to audit the current use of SUP and present suitable alternatives that are eco-friendly and affordable based on extensive research into alternative product suppliers. As a collective region of municipalities in Gros Morne, more local organizations can benefit from financial opportunities sought by AHOI to implement a plastic-waste-free strategy. The programs and proposed Bylaw of this report are designed to be implemented in stages to allow the Town of _____ and its local businesses to adapt accordingly through budget planning and incremental fees for particular items to phase out SUP. Other financial aids in reducing plastic waste can be to incorporate a tax on products that come in plastic packaging which would discourage its consumption and help to fund waste disposal fees. **See attachments for figures** (Waste Generation).

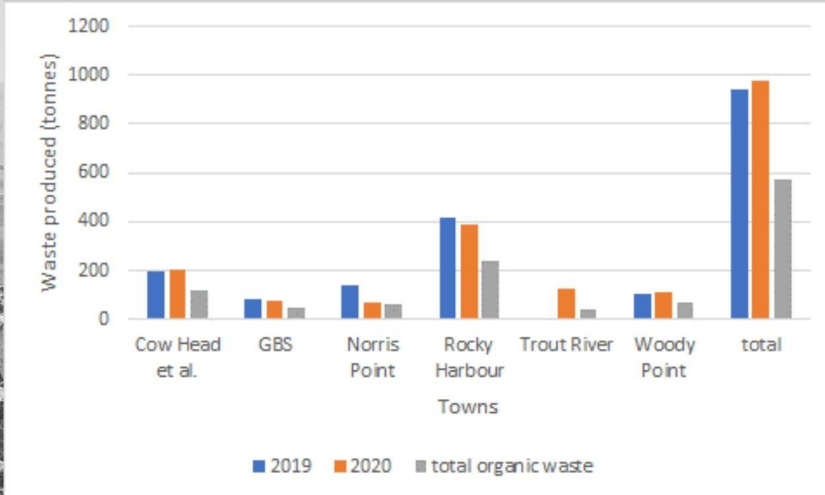
Community Consultations

Prior to the project proposal developed by AHOI, Municipalities NL conducted provincial-wide consultations to determine that 85% of residents are in favor of restricting the use of SUP and implementing a formal ban on plastic bags. At the local level, AHOI surveyed residents from each of the towns of Gros Morne and tourism operators, with an overall support of 89% for actions to eliminate SUP. We gained positive feedback on the proposed programs as many individuals expressed interest in engaging with the transition to a plastic-waste-free community. While this Bylaw has a list of actions, prohibitions, they are mere suggestions based on research we've collected and any adoption of a Bylaw ought to be tailored to the needs of the community. AHOI will continue to work with the Town of _____ to educate its residents on the implications of this Bylaw and ensure its effective implementation. **See attachments for figures** (Overall Consultation Results).

Attachments

Waste Generation (Whole Region)

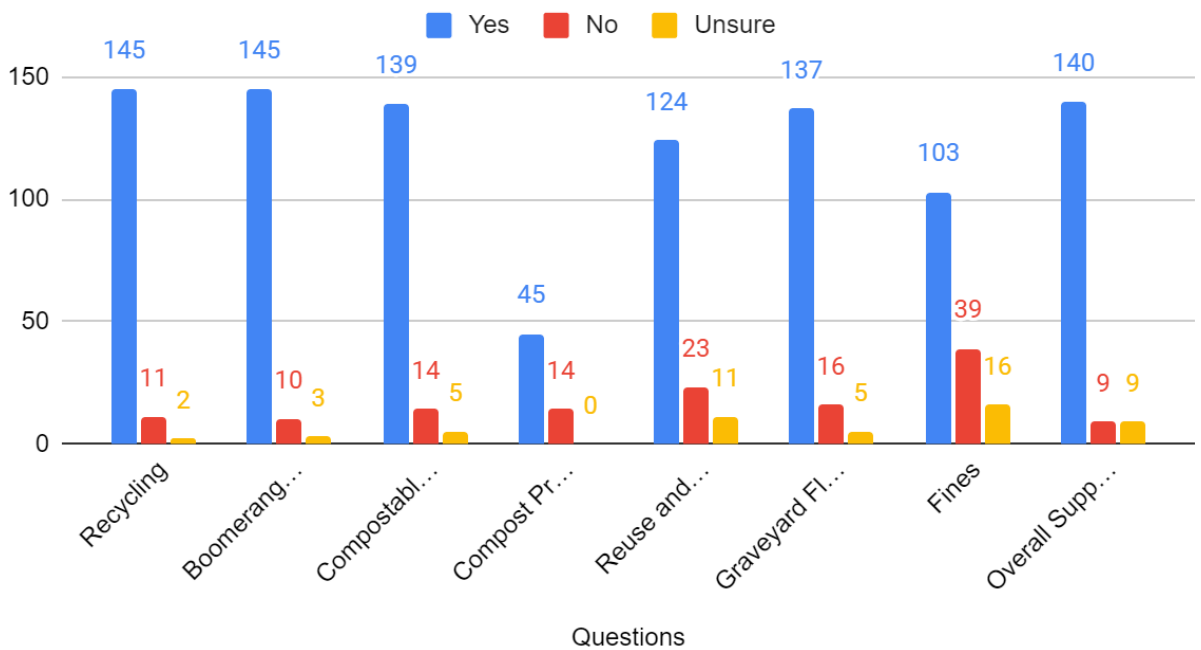
WASTE PRODUCED IN THE GROS MORNE REGION



2019 (PRE-COVID)
 ~950 tonnes of waste totalling \$155,800
 30% (Organics) by weight equals **285 tonnes**
TOTAL ~\$46,740 spent disposing of organic materials

2020 (COVID)
 ~900 tonnes of waste totalling \$147,600
 30% (Organics) by weight equals **270 tonnes**
TOTAL ~\$44,280 spent disposing of organic materials

Overall Consultation Results



(Insert town logo)

Single-Use Plastics Bylaw

The Town of _____ shall take action to prevent the environmental impacts of single-use plastics and to limit the accumulation of plastic litter in the community and its coast. Implementation of this bylaw aims to regulate the sale, distribution, and use of disposable plastics and promote sustainable alternatives that enhance the values of _____.

Pursuant to the powers vested in sections 414.1(pp)(iii) and 421.3 of the *Municipalities Act, 1999*, the Town of _____ Council enacts the following regulations:

Definitions

1. For the purpose of this bylaw,
 - (a) “Business Operator” refers to any local establishment that gains profit from the sale of a product or service including temporary accommodation, restaurants, gas stations, grocery stores, gift shops, etc.;
 - (b) “Circular Economy” refers to the prevention of waste production (plastic) by keeping materials used for manufacturing in a closed-loop system where products are reused, or recycled, repurposed, and reintroduced into the distribution chain, specifically to keep plastics in the economy and out of the environment;
 - (c) “Extended Producer Responsibility” as stated by the Government of Canada, refers to a policy approach in which a producer’s responsibility, physical and/or financial, for a product is extended to the post-consumer stage of a product’s life cycle; and
 - (d) “Single-Use Plastic” refers to items made from synthetic polymers that are meant to be disposed of after a single use, which includes
 - i. beverage containers or bottles (intended for a single serving);
 - ii. checkout bags (provided by the business operator);
 - iii. condiment packs (such as jams, ketchup, sauces);
 - iv. cutlery (such as forks, knives, spoons, stir sticks, chopsticks);
 - v. disposable container (for ready-to-eat food);
 - vi. disposable cup (for servicing hot or cold beverages);
 - vii. disposable lids (to cover cups, bowls or food containers);

- viii. drinking straws (of any size); or
- ix. produce or bulk bags (those used prior to checkout).

Prohibitions and Required Actions

3. No organized event taking place in rented venues (churches, town hall, community centers) shall operate with single-use plastics.
4. All public events, including celebrations, parades, festivals, etc. shall minimize waste by avoiding all disposable plastics including; balloons, wrapped candies, and plastic token toys.
5. All town programs including camps, sporting events, etc. must avoid single-use plastics and minimize total waste generation.
6. Any plastic item must not be intentionally left in the environment, especially where it can be transported by weather, which includes placing plastic flowers on graves.
7. All garbage and recyclable material must be collected or properly disposed of in the designated drop off facilities to prevent prohibited activities such as
 - (a) burning plastic; or
 - (b) dumping garbage at beaches.
8. Except as provided in this Bylaw, no business operator shall provide, sell, or distribute any single-use plastic to a customer.
9. A business operator may distribute reusable or paper bags to a customer if
 - (a) in the case of check-out bags the customer is first asked whether they need a bag;
 - (b) the customer is charged a fee of not less than
 - i. \$1.00 per reusable check-out bag;
 - ii. \$0.15 per paper bag that holds an approximate volume of at least 24 L until the first 6 months this Bylaw is in effect; and
 - iii. \$0.25 per paper bag that holds an approximate volume of at least 24 L after 6 months of implementing this Bylaw.
10. No business operator shall deny or discourage the use by customers of their own reusable check-out bags and containers.
11. No business operator shall deny or discourage the use by customers of their own reusable

produce or bulk bags, or reusable cups, lids, or containers in a food establishment.

Exemptions

12. Section 8 does not apply

(a) where a customer or consumer needs the single-use plastic for medical reasons;

(b) where the business distributes single-use plastics in the course of providing emergency services including, but not limited to, fire services, ambulance or paramedic services, and disaster relief; or

(c) with the exception of beverage bottles, where the single-use plastic is sold in packages of four items or more.

13. Section 9 does not apply to

(a) small paper bags (a paper bag that holds approximately 12 L or less) or paper wrap used for the following purposes:

i. package loose bulk items such as fruit, vegetables, nuts, grains, or candy;

ii. package loose small hardware items such as nails and bolts;

iii. contain or wrap frozen foods, meat, poultry, or fish, whether pre-packaged or not;

iv. protect prepared foods or bakery goods that are not pre-packaged;

v. package fresh flowers and plants; and

vi. contain prescription drugs received from a pharmacy; and

(b) reusable check-out bags offered for use by a business as part of a bag share program.

14. Section 10 does not apply where

(a) that business has reasonable concerns that use of such bags, cups, or containers would cause contamination of food or damage food such that the food would be inedible; or

(b) the use of such bags, cups, or containers contravenes provincial or federal health or food safety regulations.

Offenses and Penalties

15. The Town of _____ shall enforce penalties to individual subjects or business operators based on section 421.3 of the *Municipalities Act, 1999*.

16. An offense to this Bylaw is considered anything an individual or an organization does which

- (a) neglects or fails to uphold actions required of this Bylaw within the specified time frame without receiving exemptions; or
- (b) contradicts the mandate of this Bylaw and the prohibitions under it.

17. Any individual or business operator proven to commit an offense under this Bylaw will be penalized with a fine

- (a) if a business operator, no less than \$100.00 and not more than \$10,000.00; or
- (b) if an individual, no less than \$50.00 and not more than \$500.00.

Monitoring and Reporting

18. It is the responsibility of local business operators to

- (a) conduct audits on waste production and the use of disposable products based on monthly inventories; and
- (b) phase out disposable products with the implementation of incremental fees.

19. It is the responsibility of the Town of _____ to collaborate with local organizations and business operators to

- (a) share information and resources on how actively seek ways to reduce litter and plastic pollution;
- (b) ease the transition to disposable single use plastics toward alternative solutions which are compostable, reusable or recyclable;
- (c) transition into a Circular Economy by promoting current Extended Producer Responsibility programs and seek new opportunities; and
- (d) receive suggestions and complaints regarding implementation of the Bylaw.

Date: _____