

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Members of the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee  
**CC:** Phoebe Rai, Legislative Assistant  
**FROM:** Councillor Jennifer Watts, Chair  
**DATE:** June 1, 2016  
**SUBJECT:** **Update on National Zero Waste Committee**

### **Background on National Zero Waste**

Vision: Canada united in the achievement of zero waste, now and for future generations.

Mission: To act collaboratively with business, government and the community, at the national and international level, as an agent of change for waste prevention and reduction in the design, production and use of goods.

#### Guiding Principles:

1. Commit to collaboratively working with business, government and community partners to develop new solutions.
2. Adopt a waste prevention and reduction framework that positions Canadian cities and businesses to compete globally in an emerging resource-constrained economy.
3. Align with global and international initiatives.
4. Stress the economic, social, and environmental benefits associated with the conservation of resources
5. Consider local and global consequence and long term impacts.

For more information on the Council: <http://www.nzwc.ca>

### **Current Priority Areas of Work**

The National Zero Waste Council will focus on three priority areas of work (Circular Economy, Food and Product Design and Packaging) over the next two years. These priority areas will be advanced by working groups responsible for developing and implementing strategic projects.

## **Circular Economy**

The circular economy is an alternative to the predominant linear “take-make-dispose” economy of production and consumption – a system that relies on the availability of large quantities of relatively cheap materials and inputs in the production of goods and services, and that produces significant volumes of waste. Regenerative by design, the circular economy keeps products, components and materials at their highest utility and value, at all times. In practice this translates into:

- preventing waste through new and innovative business models or through improved design – either for disassembly or for longevity;
- maximizing the continuation of a product’s life through enhanced re-use, repair or remanufacture; and
- improving end of life processing and resource recovery.

For more info: <http://www.nzwc.ca/circular-economy/Pages/default.aspx>

## **Food**

Reducing food waste provides benefits to Canada’s economy, environment, and local communities. The wasting of edible food costs us at least \$31 billion every year, in production, shipping and lost market value, according to research by VCM International (2014). Organic waste, largely food, produces 3% of Canada’s greenhouse gas emissions (half that of the oil, gas and mining sector). This hurts our economy, municipalities and environment. The impacts of this waste are also felt by food charities serving Canadians participating in community kitchens, community gardens, nutrition programs, food banks, food hubs, and more.

For more info: <http://www.nzwc.ca/food/Pages/default.aspx>

## **Product Design and Packaging**

Adoption of circular economy thinking in design facilitates the optimization of material inputs and the reduction of waste during the use, pre- and post-use phases of a product or package’s lifecycle. Design principles that reduce and eliminate the waste from new and existing products include the use of renewable resources or by-products as opposed to virgin, non-renewable materials; light weighting of goods and packaging including food cans and glass and plastic bottles; the use of re-usable packaging (primary and secondary); bulk dispensing of consumables and design for disassembly which supports re-use and re-manufacture.

For more info: <http://www.nzwc.ca/design/Pages/default.aspx>

The council is also working to develop communication campaigns. The rationale for this work is as follows:

To reduce the generation of waste, both producers of goods and consumers will need to change their behaviour. Around the world communication campaigns have been used to effectively influence behaviour by informing and enabling consumers and businesses alike. For example, in the UK the *Love*

*Food Hate Waste* campaign has successfully reduced food waste by engaging citizens and businesses in reducing overbuying and improving storage methods.

But the design, delivery and evaluation of effective communication campaigns can be costly and complex, and beyond the resources of many organizations. The National Communication Campaigns Working Group is responding to this challenge by developing a sharing platform giving organizations and municipalities free access to proven communication campaigns in addition to a Best Practices Guide on how to create a social marketing plan.

For more info: <http://www.nzwc.ca/campaigns/Pages/default.aspx>