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**Item No. 12.1.5**  
**Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee**  
**November 21, 2018**

**TO:** Chair and Members of Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee

**-Original Signed-**

**SUBMITTED BY:**

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Kelly Denty, Director, Planning and Development

**-Original Signed-**

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Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** November 7, 2018

**SUBJECT:** **Single-use Item Reduction Strategy**

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**ORIGIN**

On January 16, 2018, the following motion of Regional Council was put and passed:

*“That Halifax Regional Council:*

- a. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to ensure staff engages with appropriate Nova Scotia Environment staff and members of the Solid Waste-Resource Management Regional Chairs Committee (‘Regional Chairs’) to discuss options including but not limited to Extended Producer Responsibility (“EPR”) for a unified approach to reduce or eliminate the use of plastic shopping bags in all Nova Scotia municipalities, particularly in light of the changing plastic film commodity markets worldwide;*
- b. That staff collaborate to engage with retailers and external experts on options to eliminate or reduce use of plastic shopping bags in the Municipality, and return, via the Environment Standing Committee at a future date, by way of a staff report with recommendations;*
- c. That Mayor Savage write to the Premier of Nova Scotia to reaffirm Halifax Regional Municipality’s support for Extended Producer Responsibility;*
- d. That Mayor Savage write to the Premier of Nova Scotia to express Halifax Regional Municipality’s support for a Provincial ban on retail plastic bags.”*

On May 3, 2018, the following motion of the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee was put and passed:

*“That the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee request a staff report on a Plastic Straw Reduction Strategy in consultation with the Restaurant Association of Nova Scotia (RANS), as well as regional head offices of major fast food chains operating within the Municipality.”*

This report responds to both the January 16 and May 3, 2018 motions.

## **LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

Under section 188(1) of the *HRM Charter*, Council has the authority to make by-laws, for municipal purposes respecting:

- ... (d) nuisances, activities and things that, in the opinion of the Council, may be or may cause nuisances, including noise, weeds, burning, odours, fumes and vibrations ....
- ... (f) businesses, business activities and persons engaged in business.

Section 188(2)(a) of the Charter provides that “Without restricting the generality of subsection (1) ... the Council may, in any by-law ... regulate or prohibit.”

Section 335 of the Charter provides that “The Council may make by-laws respecting solid waste, including, but not limited to,

- ... (j) respecting anything required to implement the integrated solid-waste resource management strategy of the Municipality.”

## **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee recommend that Regional Council direct staff to:

1. Collaborate with the industrial, commercial and institutional (ICI) sector to develop a voluntary waste reduction strategy for the consumption of single-use items focusing on plastic carry out bags, utensils, cups, containers, straws and other waste items that may be identified through this collaboration, subject to approval of the necessary program funding as part of the 19/20/21 budget.
2. Initiate an education campaign for residents and the ICI sector focused on the reduction of single-use plastics.
3. Consult with industry, internal stakeholders, the public and the Regulatory Modernization Advisory Committee on the development of a regulatory framework required to prohibit the distribution of single-use plastics in the Halifax Regional Municipality, should the initial voluntary approach fail to achieve acceptable results by December 31, 2019.
4. Review and update the 2009 HRM Corporate Guidelines for Greening Meetings and Catering Requirements.

## **BACKGROUND**

Globally, 8 million metric tonnes of plastic waste enter the oceans each year<sup>1</sup>. Experts are warning that by 2050, there will be more plastic in the world’s oceans than fish<sup>2</sup>. Most of this waste originates from the land, either from lack of collection or escape post waste management. Closer to home, plastic grocery bags make up over 3% of the litter observed throughout Nova Scotia. Notwithstanding HRM’s world-class waste management program and the fact that plastic shopping bags are recyclable, these bags still make up a

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<sup>1</sup> Figure cited in April 2018 by G7 workshop on global marine plastics solutions cohosted by Oceans North and Ocean Conservancy

<sup>2</sup> World Economic Forum “The New Plastics Economy: Rethinking the future of plastics” <https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-new-plastics-economy-rethinking-the-future-of-plastics>

visible portion of HRM's non-recyclable waste stream. It is estimated that between 300 and 500 million grocery bags are used in Nova Scotia<sup>3</sup>, which if downscaled for HRM's population, equates to between 125 and 208 million plastic shopping bags used within the municipality.

A recent national survey conducted by EcoAnalytics identified the most notable environmental concerns for Canadians. The results found that the top three issues of most concern involve plastics pollution in the ocean. Interestingly, the results showed there was a 65% agreement that governments should quickly work towards banning single-use plastics (plastic bags, straws, and bottles). Further, 31% of the survey respondents strongly agreed with a ban<sup>4</sup>.

In September 2018, the Honourable Catherine McKenna, Minister of Environment and Climate Change, the Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson, Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, and the Honourable Amarjeet Sohi, Minister of Natural Resources, co-hosted a meeting of G7 Environment, Oceans and Energy Ministers on the theme of "Working Together on Climate Change, Oceans and Clean Energy" in Halifax. The overarching message was that we cannot recycle or reduce our way out of the plastics problem. The G7 meeting promoted the Ocean Plastics Charter<sup>5</sup> that is anticipated to go to the G20 group of nations. The Charter's provisions call for national governments to set standards for increasing the reuse and recycling of plastics. It also calls for businesses to take responsibility for production methods that eliminate waste — an approach referred to as extended producer responsibility (EPR).

Moving towards a circular economy is a focus amongst stakeholders working on the plastics issue. A circular economy is defined as a regenerative system in which resource input and waste, emission, and energy leakage are minimized by slowing, closing, and narrowing energy and material loops; this can be achieved through long-lasting design, maintenance, repair, reuse, remanufacturing, refurbishing, recycling, and upcycling.<sup>6</sup> The Circular Economy Leadership Coalition was announced at the G7 meeting in Halifax. Signatories to date include IKEA Canada, Unilever Canada, Loblaw and Walmart Canada.<sup>7</sup> The coalition's vision is "To make Canada a world leader in building a sustainable, prosperous, zero-waste, low-carbon-emitting Circular Economy that benefits the lives of people at home and abroad."

The G7 conference, held in parallel to the Oceans and Energy Ministers meeting, indicated that cities are key actors to implement solutions including effective waste management collection and recycling, amplifying public education, designing resilient infrastructure, and implementing multi-scale action through policy.

Locally, single-use plastic bags are acceptable within HRM's recycling stream. When received, these materials are properly managed and diverted from the landfill. Other single-use plastic items such as straws, Styrofoam cups and utensils are acceptable within HRM's waste stream and landfilled. When single-use plastics, and for that matter all waste items, are not managed properly by residents, business, and solid waste operations they can become litter and potentially impact the environment. If waste is reduced at the source, it eliminates the need to manage these materials and decreases the overall impact to the environment.

Single-use plastics, referred to as "disposable plastics" include items intended for only one use before they are disposed of, thrown away or recycled. These can include, but are not limited to: plastic carry out bags, straws, Styrofoam containers, utensils and cups. Single-use plastics have become a mainstream issue through their contribution to litter and impacts to oceans and wildlife, as well as climate change. The

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<sup>3</sup> Figure cited in 2008 by Loblaw Companies Limited, based on information provided by Nova Scotia Environment. <http://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/atlantic-superstore-in-halifax-becomes-loblaw-companies-first-bagless-store-in-nova-scotia-535389271.html>

<sup>4</sup> Kurdi, L. (September 20, 2018). Press Release. <https://www.greenpeace.org/canada/en/press-release/4804/greenpeace-canada-65-of-surveyed-canadians-agree-governments-should-act-quickly-to-ban-single-use-plastics/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://g7.gc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/OceanPlasticsCharter.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Geissdoerfer, Martin; Savaget, Paulo; Bocken, Nancy M. P.; Hultink, Erik Jan (2017-02-01). "The Circular Economy – A new sustainability paradigm?". *Journal of Cleaner Production*. **143**: 757–768. doi:10.1016/j.jclepro.2016.12.048.

<sup>7</sup> <http://circulareconomyleaders.ca/>

importation ban of plastics in China and actions by other jurisdictions to impose bans on single-use plastics have further brought this issue to light at a global scale.

Research opinions vary on the degree to which the overall environmental impact of plastic, paper and reusable bags differ. Most agree greenhouse gas effects are greater with paper production because paper bags are heavier than plastic and require more fuel to transport. Paper bags are alternatively better if they are used 4 to 7 times, however they are not as durable as plastic. In various bag regulations, fees on paper bags are included to discourage their use and are an alternate to a higher priced reusable bag.

Most reusable bags (made of polypropylene) must be used between 11 and 99 times to offset their environmental impact. They must be used between 7 and 88 times to be less expensive than a single-use plastic bag. Reusable bags can also host harmful mould and bacteria if they are not properly maintained. Health Canada recommends wrapping fresh meat, seafood and produce in individual bags within the reusable bag to prevent cross-contamination.

When identifying alternatives to single-use plastic items, it is important to clearly identify materials where programs are in place to manage a product's end of life. For example, materials marketed as biodegradable or compostable plastic (bags, straws, cups and cutlery) are considered a contaminate in HRM's recycling and compost processing facilities. These items are difficult to differentiate from regular plastics at the recycling or compost plant operations, making removal of contamination more difficult for staff. As a result, the desirable recyclable plastic for market becomes impacted or the compost product becomes less desirable due to plastic residue.

In Halifax, plastic bags are captured in the blue bag and recycled. Single-use plastic bags make up only a portion of the film plastic being managed through HRM's Materials Recycling Facility (MRF). In fiscal 2017/2018, 1,530 tonnes of film plastic were processed through the MRF. Using a recent audit conducted at a NS MRF for comparison, an estimated 25% (382 tonnes) of this is comprised of retail carry-out bags. A bag ban is not viewed as a solution to plastic marketing challenges. Of the 24,334 tonnes of material received at the MRF in 2017/18, plastic carry-out bags would make up only 1% of the total material composition.

With the impact of the ban on plastic imports in China, new emerging opportunities at the local level with plastic processing are progressing. A recent partnership between Halifax C&D Recycling and Lake City Woodworkers is showing a promising value-added market for film plastic. Trials using plastic from HRM's MRF in the manufacturing of outdoor furniture have been successful. The small-scale production facility is currently being set up to accommodate more plastic from the Halifax program. Currently there is 75% Halifax recycled plastic content in the new outdoor furniture.

In 2009, HRM Council endorsed the HRM Corporate Guidelines for Greening Meetings and Catering Requirements, which reflected best practices in sustainability for procuring catering services and hosting meetings. The focus at that time was to reduce consumption of bottled water and focus on sustainable choices for HRM catering requirements. These guidelines required catering companies to no longer supply Styrofoam and other single-use items to HRM meetings. This policy should be reviewed by staff to ensure the use of single-use plastics by the organization is minimized.

## DISCUSSION

In Nova Scotia, plastic bags and film plastic materials are banned from landfill disposal. Nova Scotia municipalities divert this material through the curbside blue bag recycling collection system. At the December 2017 ESSC meeting, an information report advised of challenges in the world plastics recycling market. This has led to collaborative discussion between staff and the Province seeking to develop strategies for the reduction of single-use plastic bags.

At the provincial level, solid waste matters are discussed at committee sessions of Nova Scotia Solid Waste-Resource Management Regional Chairs Committee. HRM's representative on Regional Chairs, Deputy Mayor Mancini, along with other elected officials on Regional Chairs, met with the Minister of Nova Scotia Environment (NSE) on January 11, 2018 to discuss materials bans, market pressures and collaborating to develop a province-wide reduction campaign/strategy. At that meeting the Minister tasked municipalities to bring forward a municipal consensus for a province-wide ban of single-use plastic shopping bags. This request led to the Council-approved motion (a-d) as outlined above. Below is an update on each part of Council's motion.

### January 16, 2018 motion part (a):

*Staff engage with NSE and members of the Solid Waste-Resource Management Regional Chairs to discuss options including but not limited to Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for a unified approach to reduce or eliminate the use of plastic shopping bags in all NS municipalities, particularly in light of the changing plastic film commodity markets worldwide.*

On May 4, 2018, Nova Scotia Solid Waste-Resource Management Regional Chairs Committee passed a motion to write to the Minister of Environment informing him of the consultation with this Committee and to report having a consensus on a province-wide ban on single-use plastic shopping bags. A copy of this correspondence is provided in Attachment "A". In the June 28, 2018 letter of response (Attachment "B"), Minister Rankin indicates that the Province is "investigating options to reduce the amount of polyethylene film landfilled in Nova Scotia and the province will work with industry, municipalities and others on this issue to maximize diversion from landfills". Staff has been in contact with NSE and understands this will be achieved through collaboration with municipalities in the development of a province-wide waste reduction awareness campaign. To date, the provincial campaign has yet to advance.

### January 16, 2018 motion part (b):

*Engagement with retailers and external experts on options to eliminate or reduce use of plastic shopping bags in the municipalities.*

Meetings with stakeholders occurred between March and July 2018. The following feedback was received from retailers, external experts and the restaurant sector (Table 1). Participants included:

- Jim Cormier, Atlantic Director, Retail Council of Canada (RCC)
- Philippe Cantin, Chair, National Environment Committee, RCC Montreal
- Andrew Telfer, Sustainability, Walmart Canada
- Bob Kenney, Recycling Development Officer, Sustainability and Innovation, Air Quality and Resource Management, Nova Scotia Environment (NSE)
- Ashley David, Solid Waste Resource Coordinator, Sustainability and Innovation, Air Quality and Resource Management, NSE
- Jordi Morgan, VP Atlantic, Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB)
- Kate Allen, Policy Analyst, CFIB
- Renee Hopfner, Director, Corporate Social Responsibility, Sobeys
- Luc Erjavec, VP Atlantic, Restaurants Canada

**Table 1: Industry feedback**

Questions	Organizations					
	RCC	Walmart Canada	NSE	CFIB	Sobeys	Restaurants Canada
Q1. Does your organization support the reduction of single-use items including plastic bags?	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Q2. Would your organization support a provincial or Halifax bag ban if implemented?	Ban would not be the preferred approach. If a ban is implemented prefer a provincial solution	Yes, prefers use of cloth or PET re-usable bags	Seeking consensus from NS municipalities	In principle, however regulation not preferred approach for business. Referred to HRM Red Tape Reduction Strategy.	Ban not the preferred approach.	Not as the priority. Referred to HRM Red Tape Reduction Strategy.
Q3. Are there alternatives to a ban that your organization can recommend which can reduce plastic bag use?	Voluntary approach, let business decide how to reduce waste	User fees – already in place at Walmart	It was noted only that the province has authority to charge and collect fees on products and direct funds to diversion programs including litter control. Environment Action Section 102.16.	Education and campaigns	In June 2018 Sobeys announced new bags have 30% reduction in plastic resin content. Incongruent with bag bans where thin fly away bags are synonymous with litter. Recycling bin program in-store Re-usable Bag for Life. Paper Bag option.	Develop best practice reduction strategies
Q4. How can we work together on solutions/partnerships?	Memorandum of understanding, waste reduction education campaigns, resource guides for retailers.	Work in partnership with RCC	No solution provided.	Education and reusable bag campaigns	TBD	Share in a waste reduction strategy, endorsed by business

All business sector organizations that were consulted recognize the importance of waste reduction and see the demand from their customer base to support a reduction in single-use plastics. Some retailer-directed initiatives are already occurring in Halifax to encourage the shift away from single-use plastics.

In addition, the Ecology Action Centre (EAC) released a petition to “Ban the Bag” in Nova Scotia, calling for a province-wide approach to ban single-use plastic bags and advocates for the Province to take action and introduce extended producer responsibility (EPR) legislation for film plastic packaging. EAC’s online public discussion document provides support for EPR as an approach to make producers and manufacturers of products and packaging responsible for packaging reduction and costs to collect and manage at the product’s end of life.

### **HRM Retailer Single-Use Plastic Waste Reduction Initiatives**

In HRM, several businesses currently promote the reduction of plastics through several strategies such as:

- The Atlantic Superstore on Quinpool Road and Pete’s Frootique (Bedford and Halifax) do not provide single-use plastic bags. Pete’s does offer paper bags for a fee and both chains sell reusable bags.
- Bulk Barn has a Reusable Container Program and a charge of 5 cents for carry-out bags.
- Walmart Canada began charging 5 cents per single-use bag in 2016 and have seen a 50% reduction in the number of bags used. Since then Walmart has also increased the thickness of their bags to reduce ‘double-bagging’. Every Walmart store also provide containers where customers can deposit plastic-bags for recycling.
- Dollarama began charging 5 cents per single-use bag in April 2018.
- Effective July 30, 2018, Giant Tiger began charging 5 cents for a single-use bag and offering a 3-cent rebate, a credit showing on the cash register receipt to denote each reusable bag customers use.
- Several quick serve restaurants are choosing to go ‘straw-free’ or to only provide a straw when asked for one. A&W, McDonalds, Swiss Chalet, New York Fries, Harvey’s and Starbucks are among the national chains who have announced plans to go ‘plastic-straw free’.
- In July 2018, interviews with RCC representatives revealed that restaurants are waiting 4 months for paper straws with demand outpacing supply as this sector shifts from plastic to paper.

Based on this review and consultation, it is apparent that some of the business community is actively seeking to reduce certain single-use plastics within their operations. With this change being driven by consumer demand and the business community, individual entities are amending their practices in ways which provide flexibility to the operation while considering the goal of waste reduction.

### **Jurisdictional Review of Single-Use Plastic Reduction Strategies**

The 2018 United Nations (UN) Environment report “Single Use Plastics – A Roadmap for Sustainability” provides an overview of policy approaches in managing single-use plastics<sup>8</sup>. The document suggests that it may be too early to draw robust conclusions on the environmental impacts of bans and levies due to lack of information (it’s too early to report on the results of the bans) or inadequate monitoring. Although some countries have seen a drastic drop in the consumption of plastic bags, others have reported little to no change due to problems related to lack of enforcement and/or lack of affordable alternatives. As a result, in some of these cases the problem has worsened, leading to an increase in thicker plastic bag use, more plastic being used in production of materials and a rise in the black market for plastic bags. Although plastic bans can address some symptoms of the overuse of plastics, the report emphasizes the importance of long-term solutions to address the problem of plastics - waste reduction, improved waste management systems, and circular thinking. Valid alternatives to a plastics ban can include public-private partnerships, promotion of eco-friendly alternatives, social awareness and public pressure, voluntary reduction strategies and agreements, and voluntary agreements. For governments that intend to introduce bans or levies on

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<sup>8</sup> [UN Environment. Single-use Plastics: A Roadmap to Sustainability, 2018](#)

single-use plastics, the report includes a 10-step roadmap to provide guidance for policy-makers which outlines the positive and negative lessons learned regarding bans and levies that have been adopted in over 60 countries around the world.

Banning plastic bags and other single-use items is a regulatory approach exercised by governments around the world. Regulation around single-use plastic items has two main goals:

1. Reduce litter/encourage proper end of life management (and associated impact on ecosystems)
2. Encourage environmental stewardship through waste reduction

Plastic bag regulations vary and can include:

- Complete ban on the distribution of single-use plastic retail bags;
- Exemptions (i.e. bags for bulk items, newspapers or prescriptions);
- A ban on plastic bags below a certain thickness;
- Paper bags may or may not be permitted as an alternative;
- Mandatory fees on single-use bags to encourage customers to bring their own bag (BYOB).

Fees are collected by the business, typically with no conditions and no transfer of funds to the local authority to manage the end of life processing/disposal to change consumer behaviour. To incite a behavioural change fees must be high enough to shift consumer practices.

Where the management of litter and lack of waste collection systems is a common issue, regulatory action has been undertaken in some countries. This was the case in Ireland, where plastic bags were identified as a problem littering towns and villages. In the early 1990s the Irish government imposed a tax on bags. This reduced bag consumption and litter. In other jurisdictions, the lack of waste collection systems and process is impacting ocean health and implementing regulatory approaches to manage plastic waste has been undertaken in Africa, Asia (China, Bangladesh and India), Costa Rica and other Caribbean regions.

In Canada, Environment and Climate Change Canada is currently consulting with Canadians to help develop a federal-provincial-territorial approach to manage plastic waste and reduce marine litter. This public engagement is entitled “What Zero Plastic Waste Means” with input on 5 principal areas:

- Sustainable Design and Production
- Collection and Management
- Sustainable Lifestyle and Education
- Research and Innovation
- Action on the Ground

The Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME) recently released a call for input into the drafting of a framework for zero plastic waste strategy. This is intended to build on Canadian and international efforts recently launched at the G7 meeting and work already done on waste management policy.<sup>9</sup>

There is public pressure for governments to act, at all levels. Several cities have enacted regulations to reduce single-use plastic. Some also define bag thickness allowed to be provided at retail to reduce fly away thin bags. Montreal implemented fees on bags, while in Victoria and Prince Edward Island they are phasing out plastic carry out bags altogether. The impact of regulatory approaches requires an elevated level of enforcement, compliance monitoring, reporting and administration by local governments as well as for businesses. A jurisdictional review of regulatory approaches implemented in Canada follows in Table 2.

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<sup>9</sup> [https://www.ccme.ca/en/current\\_priorities/waste/index.html](https://www.ccme.ca/en/current_priorities/waste/index.html)



**Table 2: Jurisdictional Review of Regulatory Approaches to Single-Use Plastic**

Jurisdiction	Program Description	Program notes
Montreal, QC	<p>Ban on traditional plastic shopping bags (less than 50 microns thick), oxo-degradable, oxo-fragmentable or biodegradable plastic bags.</p> <p>Exemptions for restaurants and bags used for hygienic purposes, dry-cleaning or bags that contain advertising material (i.e. door to door).</p> <p>Encourage voluntary charges for other types of bags that will be offered in stores as an alternative.</p> <p>Regulation initiated to encourage behaviour change.</p>	<p>Promotes use of thicker plastic bags to get over threshold.</p> <p>May not necessarily reduce overall plastic consumption.</p>
Wood Buffalo, AB (Fort MacMurray)	<p>Ban on single-use bags that are made of less than 2.25 mils (.571 millimeter) thick polyethylene; and/or pulp or paper</p> <p>Includes, but is not limited to a door hanger bag designed to hold flyers, coupons or other advertisements and intended to be left on the doors of homes; a decorative paper or plastic gift bag where such bag is being used to transport goods; a biodegradable bag composed of, in whole or part, biodegradable plastic, oxo-biodegradable plastic, PLA-starch, polylactide, or any other plastic resin composite that is intended to degrade at a faster rate than non-biodegradable plastic film.</p>	<p>Intent of the regulations was to reduce litter. There has been a visible improvement since the regulations were implemented.</p> <p>Implementation required one dedicated FTE in Fort McMurray over one to two years. Population 62,000.</p> <p>Very few retailers chose to use thicker bags.</p>
British Columbia	<p>Recycling of plastic bags managed through drop off depots, or return to retail as part of the provincial EPR program. Plastic bags not included in curbside collection programs. Recycle BC and the RCC developed a resource guide to help retailers reduce plastic waste through best practices. Recycle BC launched a #BringYourOwnBag campaign.</p>	<p>BC has EPR</p>
Vancouver, BC	<p>Single-use Item Reduction Strategy approved by council in May 2018, following an in-depth two-year consultation process. Forms part of the city's long-term Zero Waste 2040 strategic vision. The city will prohibit businesses from serving prepared food in polystyrene foam cups and take-out containers effective November 1, 2019. Plastic drinking straws will be prohibited and single-use utensils may only be offered on request. City staff will report back to Council in December 2018 with recommendations on accommodating accessibility and inclusion needs.</p> <p>Businesses will be required to submit a plan on how they will reduce plastic and paper single-use bags in their operations. This can be through not offering bags, charging a fee (retained by the business) or another approved approach (i.e. discounts or loyalty program for using reusable).</p> <p>The Vancouver strategy does not impose an immediate ban on plastic bags, however the city will further evaluate the need to specify the amount of fees that businesses must charge, or introduce a ban on plastic and paper bags in 2021-2025 if reductions are not achieved. Hospitals and community care facilities are exempt from the strategy.</p>	<p>Gives businesses the opportunity to be innovative and develop a method that works for their type and size of business.</p> <p>Businesses will be required to track and report the number of bags they distribute, regardless of the option they choose.</p>

<p><b>Victoria, BC</b></p>	<p>Ban on single-use plastic checkout bags.</p> <p>Businesses may provide: paper checkout bags for a minimum charge of 15 cents per bag (rising to 25 cents on July 1, 2019). reusable checkout bags for a minimum charge of \$1 per bag (rising to \$2 in 2019). These fees should be stated on customer bills. Intent of the by-law is to reduce the creation of waste and associated municipal costs, to better steward municipal property, including sewers, streets and parks, and to promote responsible and sustainable business practices that are consistent with the values of the community.</p>	<p>Fee on paper bags limits their use, but still gives a lower cost option to a reusable bag.</p> <p>Ban implemented following two years of consultation.</p> <p>Ban was challenged by the Canadian Plastic Bag Association, but was upheld in BC Supreme Court.</p>
<p><b>Prince Edward Island</b></p>	<p>Province wide approach, with passing of the <i>Plastic Bag Reduction Act</i> on June 12, 2018. Ban to take effect July 1, 2020, mandating fees and prescribing alternative bags. Checkout bag prohibition Except as provided in this Act, no business shall provide a checkout bag to a customer. Exception: A business may provide a checkout bag to a customer only if: (a) the customer is first asked whether, and confirms that, the customer needs a bag; (b) the bag provided is a paper bag or a reusable bag; and (c) the customer is charged a fee of not less than (i) 15 cents for a paper bag, (ii) \$1 for a reusable bag.</p>	<p>First province-wide approach.</p> <p>Levels the playing field for retailers.</p> <p>Less confusing for consumers having province-wide regulation.</p> <p>Exemptions for small paper bags and bags used to package loose items and other miscellaneous products.</p>
<p><b>Ontario</b></p>	<p>Introduced the 3Rs Regulations in 1994 containing provisions for businesses to submit plans outlining ways they will reduce waste and what their disposal plans are.</p> <p>“A waste reduction work plan required under this Regulation shall include, to the extent that is reasonable, plans to reduce, reuse and recycle waste and shall set out who will implement each part of the plan, when each part will be implemented and what the expected results are.”</p>	<p>Feedback from provincial staff indicates these requirements were not very effective. Prior to the recent provincial election, the former government committed to review these regulations.</p>
<p><b>Northwest Territories</b></p>	<p>Consumers pay 25 cents for each single-use retail bag. This money goes into the Environment Fund to cover the program’s administrative costs and create new waste reduction and recycling initiatives.</p> <p>All retailers must register to submit fees.</p> <p>Litter was the driving force behind developing the regulations, including plastic bags blowing into the Artic ocean.</p>	<p>Generates between \$400,000 - \$600,000 per year.</p> <p>Since the start of the program, 30 million bags have been kept out of Northwest Territories landfills and off the land.</p> <p>Requires a much higher level of administration.</p> <p>70% reduction in the number of bags distributed in NWT.</p>

In Nova Scotia, 41 of 50 municipalities have made motions in support of a distribution ban on single-use plastic bags advocating for a province-wide approach as well as support for the value of EPR legislation, where industry is responsible to manage end of life processing/disposal of packaging waste. 19 of these motions were through regional waste authorities and 22 were through individual municipalities and towns.

**Policy Options for HRM**

There are two main approaches for HRM to reduce single-use plastics:

1. Voluntary: Establish a voluntary waste reduction strategy for single-use items in HRM by working with the ICI sector through public-private partnerships.
2. Regulatory: Develop and enforce regulations to prohibit the distribution of single-use plastic items such as bags and straws.

These two approaches are discussed below with their associated strengths and weaknesses.

1. Voluntary Approach

A critical component to all waste reduction strategies is raising social awareness and education to encourage behavioural change. In a voluntary public-private sector partnership approach, resources are focused on education and collaboration rather than enforcement. The public-private partnerships and voluntary agreement can be good alternatives to a ban while still achieving reductions in consumption of single-use plastics as well as other items. Voluntary reduction strategies are recognized as a progressive and affordable way to begin changing consumer and industry behaviour, and to reduce plastic pollution. This approach would not have to be limited to specific items as it can be customized to suit each sector and business. Educating business on options to implement waste reduction strategies is a key element to the success of this non-regulatory approach.

Reduction strategies do not force changes on the market, rather they build on the understanding that for change to be long lasting the choice be left with the consumer. Social awareness and public pressure can encourage consumer change, which we are already seeing evidence of in HRM and around the country. Table 3 highlights examples of the impact of public-private partnership agreements or Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) to develop and implement waste reduction strategies at a national scale.

**Table 3: National voluntary approaches**

Year Implemented	Country	Impact
2004	Luxembourg	Plastic bag consumption dropped 85% replacing free plastic bags with a reusable bag
2008	Spain	40% reduction in single-use bags achieved within one year of signing agreement with retail associations to promote prevention and reduced consumption. Retailers choose between a fee for the bag or a credit to the consumer for plastic not used.
2016	Austria	As of 2017 most of Austria's grocers have voluntarily stopped providing free bags. This agreement outlines targets more ambitious than the EU directives to reduce consumption.
2017	New Zealand	Two largest grocery store chains will voluntarily ban single-use bags by the end of 2018.

The strengths of this approach include:

- Reduces litter and plastic consumption.
- Preferred option of industry, self directed and can be supported by MOU's or partnership agreements.
- Some HRM businesses are already voluntarily implementing single-use waste reduction strategies. The municipality can assist to improve or expand.
- Industry is a partner that is consulted throughout the process on key elements such as:

- Reporting targets and measurements to be determined in consultation with industry.
- Developing waste reduction resources, guiding principles and setting targets for reducing single-use items customizable to the needs of a business.
- Municipal education and awareness programs can align to message common principles and objectives.
- Reduced enforcement and administration resources and reporting costs to businesses.
- Reduction in single-use plastics requiring handling at waste management facilities (recycling and garbage).
- Promotes environmental stewardship.
- Less red tape than the regulatory approach and can be implemented sooner.
- Positions and reinforces HRM as a leader in solid waste management and environmental stewardship.

The weaknesses of the voluntary approach include:

- May not be perceived as “tough enough” by public and key stakeholders
- Measuring targets could be a challenge.
- Requires additional staffing resources.
- May not have as high an impact as regulation as some businesses could choose not to participate.
- If not all businesses are participating, others might choose not to for several reasons including the need to stay competitive.

Staff feedback from engagement meetings with industry sector associations (RCC, Restaurant Association of Canada and CFIB) reveal a willingness to work with Halifax Solid Waste as partners to implement waste reduction strategies. Working with industry leaders will also allow for information sharing on alternative products and packaging to ensure these options are compatible with the municipal compost and recycling system.

Currently the ICI sector and residents find themselves procuring products marketed as being more sustainable, often at higher costs unfortunately only to discover after the fact the items are not compatible with local composting and recycling systems. It is common for products and packaging to be on retail store shelves without any collaboration with HRM to determine if waste facilities can process the materials as advertised. Establishing a partnership to work with businesses and develop waste reduction education strategies can help to bridge this communication gap.

Education is a critical component to HRM’s success in waste diversion. In proceeding with a voluntary approach, education staff would collaborate with business association representatives to develop waste reduction strategies and assist with program implementation, monitoring and reporting. The proposed voluntary waste reduction strategy for reducing single-use plastics in HRM would likely include:

- Municipally-led engagement with the ICI sector to identify interested businesses and propose entering into voluntary public-private partnerships with the goal of reducing single-use plastics in their operations;
- Education sessions on HRM’s waste system, alternatives to single-use plastics and examples of innovation and success;
- Development of a waste reduction plan framework;
- Development of resource materials and business kits to implement reduction programs;
- Development of a resource list of acceptable recyclable or compostable alternatives to single-use plastics in HRM;
- Development and implementation of an HRM business recognition program to profile business waste reduction initiatives; and
- Agreeing to and implementing an approach to measure and report on success.

Working in partnership with businesses to develop a waste reduction strategy allows for innovation and creativity in identifying solutions. Individual strategies can be shared across sectors and businesses to enhance best practices.

A memorandum of understanding with ICI sector operators (retail, restaurants etc.), to develop a waste reduction strategy has the least amount of red tape, but can still include accountability for action. It also raises public awareness, which can result in changes to consumer behaviour. Through a voluntary reduction strategy an enforcement, compliance and reporting component is not needed. The recommended approach requires additional education staff instead of enforcement staff. The approach is cost effective, meets the needs of industry as outlined through consultation and helps to address HRM's overall waste reduction focus. Additional staff will be required to implement this recommendation through to the end of the 2019/20 fiscal year.

## 2. Regulatory Approach

A regulatory prohibition on the distribution of single-use plastics would place Halifax on the map alongside other leading Canadian municipalities with respect to this growing issue. HRM's approach and lessons learned could benefit other municipalities in Nova Scotia who may wish to follow suit in the absence of a Province-led ban.

Strengths of the regulatory approach:

- Reduces litter and plastic consumption.
- Provides a level playing field for all businesses.
- Promotes environmental stewardship.
- Reduction in single-use plastics requiring handling at waste management facilities (recycling and garbage).
- Positions and reinforces HRM as a leader in solid waste management and environmental stewardship

Weaknesses of the regulatory approach:

- The costs are typically borne by the consumer.
  - Residents who use single-use bags would have to purchase kitchen catchers/bin liners and pet waste bags if they were banned from the Municipality.
- Possible financial burden on businesses.
- Residents will no longer have access to free bags for waste or to use for paper in HRM's recycling program.
- Implementation of fees could create an administrative burden on businesses, especially if measures do not align with future provincial policy.
- Proactive enforcement would be a challenge.
- HRM has the systems and infrastructure in place to recycle retail plastic bags, and local businesses are using this material to create products. Banning single-use carry out bags could present a problem for this new circular economy partnership.
- May require additional staff and financial resources.

## **HRM's Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA)**

The HRM Charter of Governing Principles for Regulation - Administrative Order Number 2017-0002-ADM helps to guide the design, adoption, implementation, evaluation and revision of HRM's general application By-laws to meet core principles for better regulation. The Charter's principles are used to help determine whether regulation is the best policy instrument compared to other non-regulatory options.

To help determine whether regulation is likely to be the best option to address waste issues associated with single-use plastics, HRM's Regulatory Impact Assessment – Stage 1 Screening Tool (RIA) has been applied to support decision-making regarding next steps.

The RIA indicates the following key considerations:

- Businesses have not yet been given ample opportunity to implement best practices/voluntary efforts and education.
- Restaurants Canada and Retail Council of Canada are interested in working with HRM to educate and promote best practices, such as a 'Straw Free Halifax' campaign.
- Restaurants Canada is working on a best practices document and the release of a member survey on options to reduce single-use plastics.
- Businesses are already reacting to consumer demand (and based on consultations they want to do the right thing).

Before a ban can be implemented, a Business Impact Assessment is required to understand the full implications of this regulatory approach on business.

### **Education Campaign on Reducing Single-Use Plastic Items**

Education is a critical component to HRM's success in waste diversion. It is recommended that in addition to engaging the ICI sector on a voluntary approach to reducing single-use plastics, an education campaign is required. Currently, the ICI sector and residents find themselves procuring products marketed as being more sustainable, often at higher costs unfortunately only to discover after the fact the items are not compatible with local composting and recycling systems. It is common for products and packaging to be on retail store shelves without any collaboration with HRM to determine if waste facilities can process the materials as advertised. An education campaign can be developed that focuses on reducing consumption of single-use plastics by adopting viable alternatives.

January 16, 2018 motion part (c) and (d):

*That Mayor Savage write to the Premier of Nova Scotia to reaffirm Halifax Regional Municipality's support for Extended Producer Responsibility;*

*That Mayor Savage write to the Premier of Nova Scotia to express Halifax Regional Municipality's support for a Provincial ban on retail plastic bags.*

Halifax Regional Council's support for EPR was first communicated in 2014 when the Province conducted stakeholder engagement to evolve the provincial solid waste management regulations. Council supported implementation of EPR legislation. As plastic shopping bags and other single-use items constitute packaging, jurisdictions with EPR legislation manage the production and capture of packaging, including bags and other single-use items in the recycling program and are required to meet targets for recycling. Implementation of EPR helps drive the circular economy whereby waste becomes a feedstock in the re-manufacture of new products and packaging and can drive demand for recycled content.

Nova Scotia municipalities, including HRM, have provided letters of support for EPR (Attachment C). Council's correspondence to Premier McNeil encourages the Province to take a leadership role and implement a province-wide ban on retail shopping bags and reaffirms support for EPR.

### **Increased Diversion Credit Funding**

In addition to specific Divert NS funding for education staff, Solid Waste receives annual funding known as diversion credits. Diversion credits are a funding mechanism to support municipal waste operations. In 2018/19 Solid Waste budgeted to receive \$2.3 million. Based on revised estimates provided by Divert NS, annual funding will increase to approximately \$2.5 million this year. Divert NS has confirmed an estimated \$2.5 million will be provided to HRM for 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21 based on the projected diversion

credit fund and anticipated municipal diversion rates. This funding could be allocated to program support without impacting the Municipality's current (2018/19) or planned (2019/20) net operating budget.

### **Conclusion**

While there are compelling arguments for both the voluntary and regulatory approaches, and successful case studies for each, it is recommended that a voluntary approach be taken first to take advantage of the existing momentum to address single-use plastics and to build on the impressive leadership within the ICI sector at local, national and global scales.

At the same time, it is important to be prepared should the voluntary approach fail to make an acceptable, measurable difference. The regulatory framework and By-law for the prohibition of single-use plastics will be developed in tandem with the education and engagement efforts on the voluntary reduction strategy.

In the absence of a province-led initiative on the reduction of single-use plastics and extended producer responsibility, HRM is committed to working collaboratively with the ICI sector, the public, and the Regulatory Modernization Advisory Committee to effectively and efficiently reduce single-use plastics in the municipality.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The voluntary waste reduction strategy is estimated to cost \$200,000 annually. Funding will generally be directed to positions within Solid Waste, as well as education, communication and promotional budgets as required. This funding request will be brought forward for Council's consideration during the 2019/20/21 budget discussions, the remaining recommended initiatives are expected to be achieved through existing HRM resources.

The financial implications of a by-law to regulate or prohibit the use of single-use plastics is unknown at this time but will be determined during the development of the regulatory framework.

### **RISK CONSIDERATION**

The risk of beginning with a voluntary approach is low. The main concern is a potential lack of participation resulting in unacceptable results by December 31, 2019. Based on the consultation with the ICI sector and on industry-led initiatives that are underway, this risk is considered to be low and unlikely to occur.

There are several risks associated with implementing a regulatory ban on single-use plastics. The Municipality may be perceived as being unnecessarily heavy-handed by implementing a ban despite a growing number of initiatives by industry and NGOs to curb the use of plastics. There is a further risk to implementing a ban that is not applied province-wide. This could prove difficult for businesses operating in multiple municipalities in Nova Scotia. The collaborative relationships that have been established between the ICI sector and the Municipality may be strained as consultation revealed that this is not their preferred approach.

There is a risk to inaction that could result in negative public perception and lack of progress towards reducing harmful single-use plastics.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Engagement has been conducted in meetings with the retail and restaurant association sectors in the development of this report. Multi-stakeholder and community engagement has not taken place. The report recommendations require significant engagement with the ICI sector, the public, and the Regulatory

Modernization Advisory Committee for both the voluntary waste reduction strategy and the potential regulations to prohibit single-use plastics.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are positive environmental implications with the staff recommendation. A properly-designed and supported voluntary waste reduction strategy for single-use plastics will reduce the amount of plastic waste and litter in the municipality and in our environment. An education and engagement effort will help the public and key stakeholders understand the impacts of single-use plastics and will highlight alternative products and approaches. Revisiting the Municipality's 2009 HRM Corporate Guidelines for Greening Meetings and Catering Requirements will allow the organization to reaffirm its longstanding commitment to sustainability by strengthening these requirements and reminding the administration of its obligation to follow them. Improvements will have positive environmental impacts by helping to reduce single-use plastics as well as other items covered in these requirements.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

The Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee may recommend that Regional Council:

1. Take no action now and allow businesses to find solutions to respond to customer demands.
2. Direct staff to collaborate with stakeholders and to draft a By-law for Council's consideration to eliminate the distribution of single-use plastics now without first attempting a voluntary approach.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

- A – Regional Chairs letter
- B – Minister letter
- C – HRM Council letter
- D – Corporate Guidelines: Greening Meetings & Catering Requirements

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A copy of this report can be obtained online at [halifax.ca](http://halifax.ca) or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

Report Prepared by: Shannon Miedema, Energy & Environment Program Manager, 902.490.3665  
Shannon Betts, Solid Waste Policy Analyst, 902.490.7153  
Laurie Lewis, Program Manager, Policy and Outreach, 902.490.7176

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May 28, 2018

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**Nova Scotia Solid Waste-  
Resource Management  
Regional Chairs Committee**  
PO Box 639  
Mahone Bay, NS  
B0J 2E0

Sent via email  
Minister.Environment@novascotia.ca

Honourable Iain Rankin  
Nova Scotia Environment  
PO Box 442  
Halifax, NS  
B3J 2P8

Dear Minister Rankin,

**REGION 1:**  
Amanda McDougall

We continue to discuss, within our communities, the opportunity to ban plastic shopping bags. Realizing this is only a very small part of the larger issue, we look forward to working with your team on developing a province-wide reduction campaign/strategy.

**REGION 2a:**  
Vernon Pitts  
**REGION 2b:**  
Jim Ryan

Each Regional Chair met within their regions to discuss the ban on plastic shopping bags. Some wrote resolutions while others received individual council motions. Overall, the regions support a province-wide ban on single-use shopping bags.

**REGION 3:**  
Tom Taggart

On May 4, 2018 the following motion was passed:

**REGION 4:**  
Tony Mancini

**MOTION:** that we write to the Minister of Environment informing that we consulted within our regions and have a consensus on a province-wide ban on single use plastic shopping bags. **M/C**

**REGION 5:**  
John Kinsella

While our Priorities Group continues to evolve the file on an EPR Consensus Proposal for Printed Paper and Packaging we are happy to report that we do have a consensus on any initiative to reduce the use of single use plastic shopping bags.

**REGION 6:**  
Michael Ernst

Kind Regards,

**REGION 7:**  
Leland Anthony

per

Leland Anthony – Chairman  
Nova Scotia Solid Waste-Resource Management Chairs

cc. Chuck McKenna – Mngr Haz. Mat., Contaminated Sites and Solid Waste Unit



**Environment**  
**Office of the Minister**

P.O. Box 442, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada B3J 2P8 • [www.novascotia.ca/nse](http://www.novascotia.ca/nse)

Our File number:  
19799-49-53235

**JUN 28 2018**

Valda Walsh and Leland Anthony



Dear Valda Walsh and Warden Leland Anthony:

Thank you for your letter of May 23, 2018, regarding municipal support for a province-wide single use shopping bag ban as well as your progress toward a consensus proposal on EPR for Paper and Packaging.

Nova Scotia is a leader in recycling and waste diversion, and we will continue to be. We all want to see these materials reduced and recycled rather than put in the landfill.

I encourage all Nova Scotians to use reusable bags and reduce their use of these materials wherever possible. Nova Scotia Environment is investigating options to reduce the amount of polyethylene film landfilled in Nova Scotia. The Province will work with industry, municipalities and others on this issue. It is important that we all work in partnership, to maximize diversion from landfills.

Sincerely,

Iain Rankin, MLA  
Minister of Environment

**HALIFAX**



**MIKE SAVAGE**

**MAYOR  
LE MAIRE  
ME'R**

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February 20, 2018

The Honourable Stephen McNeil, M.L.A.  
Premier of Nova Scotia  
Post Office ox 726  
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 2T3

Dear Premier McNeil: 

On January 16, 2018, Halifax Regional Council passed a motion regarding options to reduce or eliminate the use of plastic shopping bags in the municipality. The motion outlined several actions to advance Halifax's approach to managing plastic shopping bags, including:

- Engagement of municipal staff with Nova Scotia Environment staff, and members of the Solid Waste-Resource Management Regional Chairs Committee, to discuss possible unified approaches to managing plastic bags across all Nova Scotia municipalities, including but not limited to Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), and
- Engagement of municipal staff with retailers and external experts to discuss options to manage plastic shopping bags in the municipality.

I write to you now regarding the two remaining actions approved as part of Regional Council's January 16th motion. Namely, I write to reaffirm Halifax Regional Municipality's support for Extended Producer Responsibility in the Province of Nova Scotia. I also wish to express Halifax Regional Municipality's support for a provincial ban on retail plastic bags.

Nova Scotia has long been recognized as a leader in solid waste-resource management, both in Canada and internationally. You now have an opportunity to reaffirm Nova Scotia's bold leadership in this area. Given the rapidly changing global markets for solid waste-resource commodities, Nova Scotia and other jurisdictions face important questions about

Honourable Stephen McNeil, M.L.A.  
Page Two  
February 20, 2018

recycling programs, technological innovation and waste-resource regulation. Now is the time for us to work together to seek collaborative, innovative solutions that will be an example for all.

Please do not hesitate to contact my office if you wish to meet with me or my Council colleagues to discuss this matter.

Kindest regards,

Mike Savage  
Mayor



**Corporate Guidelines:  
Greening our Meeting  
and  
Catering Requirements**

As a community leader in sustainability, Halifax Regional Municipality recognizes the opportunities that are available in making environmental and sustainable choices in organizing our corporate meeting, training, and catering requirements. With these opportunities in mind, staff is expected to follow these Guidelines for Greening our Meetings and Catering Requirements.

**Greening our Meetings**

Whether organizing a small departmental meeting, or a large event for community consultation, there are a number of elements to consider for the meeting planner:

Planning

- Maximize utilization of electronic notices, agenda distribution, publication, using [www.halifax.ca](http://www.halifax.ca), HRM Intranet, e-mail and other electronic resources as appropriate
- Provide phone or e-mail registration as opposed to facsimile or mail-in
- Minimize your distribution or catering requirements by knowing the number of participants
- If there are handouts or printing requirements, ensure it is double sided. And for larger event requirements, please utilize our Printing Centre – as they provide the most sustainable and minimal impact printing services in the organization
- Strive to deliver a paperless event. Offer attendees presentations, minutes, or agendas via e-mail or posting them on the internet or intranet
- Tell vendors or other organizers that you are organizing a green meeting and request they follow these guidelines

Location

- Organize the meeting in a location that minimizes travel requirements and has Metro Transit service availability
- When possible, select locations that offer the most sustainable facility (for example, several of HRM's newest building facilities are built to LEED standards and require minimal heating or power to support meetings)
- If using a Hotel either for the meeting or for out of town accommodations for attendees, consider using Green Leaf rated facilities

Meeting Room Set Up

- Ensure that the room offers the appropriate waste resource management receptacles, including compost bins, recycling bins for bottles and paper; And, notify attendees that they are available
- Request white boards be placed in the room in lieu of flip charts and request no odor markers
- Request that the facility does not set out pens and note pads





**Corporate Guidelines:  
Greening our Meeting  
and  
Catering Requirements**

**Greening our Catering or Food and Beverage Requirements**

- Where possible select caterers who offer local and / or organic foods
- Order fair trade coffee, tea and sugar
- Ask attendees to bring their own coffee mug or water canteen
- Juice and water should be provided in pitchers rather than single serving bottles
- Request cloth napkins or Ecologo certified paper napkins
- Use re-useable mugs, glasses, plates and cutlery. If not available, select compostable paper plates. Please note that despite claims, currently a paper cup is not available that is properly compostable
- Ask for glass or porcelain bowls for sugar, cream and food condiments rather than single serving packages
- Provide compost bins and recycling receptacles
- Again, know your requirements and do not over order food
- At the end of the meeting, invite guests to take any left over food / beverage home.
- If providing snacks or desert, select healthy and nutritious options such as fruits and vegetable trays
- No Styrofoam!

Note on bottled water: Halifax Regional Municipality has one of the highest quality water systems in the world managed by the Halifax Regional Water Commission. Many bottled water brands simply bottle water from their respective municipal supplies. Bottled water has a high environmental cost, including the resources required to make the plastic bottles, transportation emissions, and the waste from bottled water consumption.

