

Item 8.1

**HALIFAX**

# **Single-Use Plastics in HRM**

Environment & Sustainability Standing Committee  
December 6, 2018

# Background

- Recommendation report responds to 2 motions
  - RC Jan 16, 2018 – reduction of plastic shopping bags and promotion of extended producer responsibility
  - ESSC May 3, 2018 – reduction of plastic straws
- Previous report
  - January 16, 2018 - Options to Reduce or Eliminate the use of Plastic Shopping Bags in the Municipality

# Plastics – Local to Global Issue

- International
  - Meeting of G7 Environment, Oceans & Energy Ministers in Halifax in September – Ocean Plastics Charter
  - 2018 UN Environment report
    - Too early to tell if bans are effective, mixed results.
    - Bans address some symptoms of overuse of single-use plastics, but long-term solutions are key.

# Plastics – Local to Global Issue

- Canada
  - National survey of environmental concerns by EcoAnalytics
    - Top 3 relate to plastic pollution in the oceans
    - 65% agreement that governments should ban single use plastic
  - Circular Economy Leadership Coalition
  - Developing framework for a zero plastic waste strategy

# Plastics – Local to Global Issue

- Nova Scotia
  - 300-500 million grocery bags used per year
  - Plastic bags make up 3% of total litter observed
  - 41 of 50 municipalities have made motions in support of a distribution ban and support a province-wide approach and EPR legislation

# Plastics – Local to Global Issue

- HRM
  - Plastic bags captured in blue bag and diverted from landfill
    - 382 tonnes or 25% of the film plastic processed in 2017/18 was plastic carry out bags
    - This makes up 1% of the total material processed at the recycling facility in 2017/18
  - Some plastic bags enter waste stream to landfill
    - E.g. soiled bags used for pet waste, garbage

# Consultations

- Staff completed a focused consultation with industry and stakeholders:
  - Consumer demand for action is growing
    - Businesses are adapting
    - Various models being used
  - Leadership by some to reduce single-use plastics
  - Ban not their preference, especially if not province-wide
  - Ban does not align with Red Tape Reduction Strategy

# Regulatory Modernization

- Red tape reduction joint project
- HRM Charter of Governing Principles for Regulation - Administrative Order Number 2017-0002-ADM
  - Regulation should never be an instrument of first resort, and should be deployed only when necessary and where there is clearly no better policy alternative.
  - 8 (c) if the purpose of a Regulation may be achieved by an alternative means, including (i) whether a Regulation is preferable to a self-regulatory approach, such as doing an education program

# Alternatives to Regulation

- Public-private partnerships
- Promotion of eco-friendly alternatives
- Social awareness and public pressure
- Voluntary reduction strategies
- Voluntary agreements

# Building on the momentum

- HRM businesses are already voluntarily implementing single-use waste reduction strategies.
- The municipality can assist businesses to improve reduction and expand efforts through partnerships.
- HRM has the systems and infrastructure in place to recycle retail plastic bags, and local businesses are beginning to use this material to create products (circular economy).

# Staff Recommendations

- Attempt voluntary approach first
  - Collaborate with ICI sector on voluntary waste reduction strategy
  - Education campaign for ICI sector and public
- Be prepared with regulation should the voluntary approach fail
  - Consult on the regulatory framework and By-law on the prohibition of single-use plastics developed in tandem with education and engagement efforts on the voluntary reduction strategy.

# Thank You

Shannon Miedema  
Manager  
Energy & Environment  
Planning & Development

miedems@halifax.ca  
902.490.3665

Matt Keliher  
Manager  
Solid Waste  
Transportation & Public Works

kelihem@halifax.ca  
902.490.6606

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