



世界自然基金會
香港分會

WWF-Hong Kong

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Chairman and Members of Panel on Environmental Affairs, Legislative Council
(c/o Clerk to Panel on Environmental Affairs)
Legislative Council Complex,
1 Legislative Council Road, Central, Hong Kong

22 May 2020
(By post and e-mail)

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Panel on Environmental Affairs Meeting on 25 May 2020, agenda item
#IV “Management of Waste Plastics”

We understand that “Management of Waste Plastics” will be discussed during the meeting of the Panel on Environmental Affairs on 25 May 2020. Plastic pollution is a global crisis that is expected to worsen if there is not a drastic change. Plastic waste is expected to quadruple from 2010 to 2050, and global recycling capacity is expected to only cover a third of the waste produced. In order to address the plastic pollution crisis and stop leakage into the environment, WWF-Hong Kong (WWF) believes that it is necessary to redesign the plastic production waste cycle and “close the loop” through improved product design, recovery, recycling and reuse. With our vision of No Plastic in Nature by 2030 or earlier, we have the following Plastic SMART recommendations to manage waste plastics:

1. Establish a roadmap by 2021 to phase out all single-use plastic tableware by 2025 or earlier

WWF appreciates that EPD commenced a study on the feasibility, scope and mechanism of regulating disposable plastic tableware, which is scheduled for completion by the end of 2020. A survey conducted by WWF published in 2019¹ reveals that nearly 80% of respondents support regulation of single-use plastic tableware in the F&B industry, that 76% of respondents have previously refused single-use plastics when purchasing take-away, and that over 60% of respondents have previously avoided restaurants that use disposable plastic tableware. The results shows growing support in Hong Kong for addressing the disposable plastics crisis and preserving the ecological health of our marine environment. It is time for the government to formulate a workable timeline for the F&B industry to phase-out single-use plastics by 2025 or earlier and work with the industry to ensure a smooth transition that is a win-win for all parties, such as establishing an aid fund for the F&B industry to roll out incentive schemes for customers to bring their own cutlery and containers.

¹ https://www.wwf.org.hk/en/news/press_release/?22540/WWF

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2. Ban polystyrene tableware and drinking straws by 2022

During 2014-2016, WWF conducted a citizen science survey to study Hong Kong's marine litter problem². Survey result have shown the top types of litter collected were plastics such as polystyrene fragments and disposable plastic packaging. Due to their light weight and neutral or positive buoyancy, many types of disposable plastic float and spread widely across the sea. Polystyrene boxes and cups break apart easily into tiny pieces that are difficult to remove from the marine environment. WWF advocates that all polystyrene tableware and plastic drinking straws are banned by 2022.

3. Develop a regulated Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) system for plastic packaging and tableware by 2025 or earlier

WWF notes that government engaged a consultant to conduct a feasibility study on introducing a Producer Responsibility Scheme on plastic beverage containers and will consult the public on the detailed proposal. As mentioned in point 2 above, WWF's survey has found that the top ten types of marine litter collected were plastics, including disposable plastic packaging and tableware. WWF suggests the government develop a regulated EPR system for plastic packaging as well as disposable tableware.

4. Regulate plastic labelling and single-use biodegradable tableware (e.g. PLA)

In order to reduce our plastic footprint, WWF is advocating for new policy standards, new incentives for industry, and new models of innovation for plastic avoidance, use, reuse and waste management. Currently, it is difficult to identify types of plastics without a proper regulated plastic labelling policy. WWF suggests a mandatory labelling policy on all plastic items, such as single-use tableware and packaging to facilitate proper recycling.

Furthermore, there are new types of "biodegradable" plastics on the market, such as PLA. However, in order to biodegrade, these types of materials required a specific physical environment, with a specific temperature and humidity level, meaning that these materials will not "biodegrade" if they are leaked to a natural environment that does not meet these specific requirements. WWF suggests the government to regulate this type of "biodegradable" plastic as it can probably pose the same environmental threats as single-use plastic.

5. Set a high levy on single-use shopping bags of any material, with minimal exemptions by 2022

Hong Kong should strive to remove single-use plastic shopping bags from our economy in the near future. Many other cities and countries around the world have successfully done so in an economical and cost-effective way. Their environment has improved as a result. The plastic shopping bag disposal rate has seen an increasing trend since 2015,

²https://d3q9070b7kewus.cloudfront.net/downloads/coastalwatchreport_en_compressed.pdf

despite the HKD0.5 levy scheme. This shows that the existing levy is becoming less effective since its launch. Many shops provide non-plastic alternatives, such as paper bags free of charge, WWF suggests that any type of single-use shopping bags should be levied in order to encourage a “bring your own bag” culture. WWF advocates the government to set a high levy on single-use shopping bags of any materials, with minimal exemptions by 2022.

We believe that the above recommendations are necessary if Hong Kong is to achieve the goal of No Plastic in Nature by 2030 or earlier. We hope to see Hong Kong transform into Asia’s most sustainable and liveable city which we can all be proud of.

Yours faithfully,



David Olson, Ph.D.
Director of Conservation
WWF-Hong Kong

c.c. Secretary for the Environment, Wong Kam-sing, GBS, JP