



JOINT PRESS RELEASE

September 15, 2020

For Immediate Release

Tofino and Ucluelet Single-Use Item Bylaws Approved by the Province

West Coast Communities Among the First in BC to Take Action on Plastics

TOFINO and UCLUELET, B.C. – The Districts of Tofino and Ucluelet are excited to announce that they are among the first municipalities in BC to have their Single-Use Item Regulation Bylaws approved by the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, along with the cities of Victoria, Saanich and Richmond.

On World Ocean's Day of 2019, the two West Coast municipalities joined together to implement bans on plastic bags and plastic straws under a provision of the *Community Charter* which allows local governments to regulate businesses. After a significant court case at the BC Supreme Court striking down the City of Victoria's Checkout Bag Bylaw, the Districts decided to re-draft their regulations under a different provincial authority, and take the opportunity to also ban polystyrene foam packaging for prepared foods and include accessibility clauses for persons requiring the use of plastic straws.

Despite new public health measures and accompanying increases in take-out food, the West Coast has not seen a major rebound toward single-use plastics. Businesses in both communities have largely all made the shift away from plastic straws and bags, and many of those serving take-out food have already been experimenting with compostable containers instead of polystyrene. To ensure that businesses continue to be supported in shifting away from single-use items, the Districts will continue to partner with community organizations such as Surfrider Pacific Rim and there will be a six-month grace period before enforcement of the polystyrene foam provisions begins.

George Heyman, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy

"The residents and businesses of Tofino and Ucluelet are showing us all that action on plastic waste is possible and welcomed by communities as we continue to work toward an enduring economic recovery. We know that a healthy environment underpins a healthy economy, and both are critical to support human health and wellbeing. On our west coast particularly, ocean health and supporting marine life and a healthy environment is crucial to tourism and local lifestyle. We are continuing to work with communities so that they have the authority to take action on reducing single use plastics and other debris that can end up littering our communities at significant cost."

Josie Osborne, Mayor, District of Tofino:

"We've heard loudly and clearly from West Coast residents, visitors and businesses that single-use plastic packaging has no place in our waste streams, our landfills or polluting local waters and beaches," said Josie Osborne, Mayor of Tofino. "Bringing a municipal bylaw into force was the final step to phasing out items that we simply do not need, and we're excited to join all the local governments that are working with their communities and with the Province to reduce the use of single-use plastics."

Mayco Noel, Mayor, Resort Municipality of Ucluelet:

“This bylaw is an important step forward and we thank the Province for their support on this initiative,” said Mayco Noel, Mayor of Ucluelet. “We are excited to continue the work with our provincial and regional partners and local businesses to reduce single-use item waste on the West Coast.”

To learn more about Tofino and Ucluelet Single-Use Item Regulation Bylaws, please visit www.tofino.ca/plastics and www.ucluelet.ca/plastics.

Other Links

- View the Provincial Press Release: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020ENV0051-001715>
- Learn more about the Province of BC’s CleanBC Plastics Action Plan: <https://cleanbc.gov.bc.ca/plastics>
- Provide feedback on the Province’s Policy Intentions Paper proposals to regulate lost fishing gear and other materials: <https://feedback.engage.gov.bc.ca/574734?lang=en>

Contacts:

Elyse Goatcher-Bergmann

Manager of Corporate Services
District of Tofino
(250) 725-3229 | elysegb@tofino.ca

Joseph Rotenburg

Manager of Corporate Services
District of Ucluelet
250 266-2095 | jrotenberg@ucluelet.ca

-END-