



Council Member Motion

For the Committee of the Whole Meeting of Feb. 18th, 2021

To: Committee of the Whole

Date: Feb 11th, 2021

From: Councillor Loveday

Subject: Advocacy for a Provincial Circular Economy Strategy

Background:

The following resolution was drafted by the Zero Waste and Circular Economy Working Group of the Climate Caucus and aligns with the City of Victoria's Climate Leadership Plan, the newly adopted Zero Waste Victoria plan, and goals in the Victoria 3.0 economic development plan. Climate Caucus is a non-partisan network of 300+ local elected climate leaders driving system change to transform our communities in ten years. The resolution calls for Council to send a motion to AVICC and UBCM advocating for the Province of BC to develop a provincial Circular Economy strategy.

The provisioning and management of food and goods consumed by BC Communities produces quantities of waste, pollution and carbon emissions that exceed equitable per capita environmental limits. The average British Columbian is consuming materials at a rate 3x what the earth can sustain and Canadians in general are one of the highest per capita generators of waste in the world. Through a "by systems" analysis of GHG emissions, nearly 50% of North American emissions result from the extraction, production, transportation, consumption and disposal of materials for the provisioning of goods and food. As a global community we have exceeded key environmental limits in terms of per capita ghg emissions, land conversion, loss of biodiversity and chemical pollution. With the large amount of materials consumed and disposed of by British Columbians, an increased effort to transition out of our current linear take-make-waste economic system is necessary to do our fair share for the health of the planet.

To date, hundreds of local governments have adopted Zero Waste as the ultimate goal for waste reduction efforts. The concept of the Circular Economy broadens the vision of Zero Waste and establishes a concrete model that couples economic well-being with environmental sustainability. There is a need for a comprehensive provincial circular economy strategy to improve BC's waste reduction efforts and to take advantage of emerging economic opportunities. To date, waste reduction policy, has been focused on "downstream" interventions looking for disposal alternatives to materials such as

composting and recycling collection for selected materials. Critical “upstream” drivers of waste, pollution and GHG’s resulting from the types and origins of products entering into local economies and the infrastructure and services necessary to keep materials in circulation have not been given adequate attention. Currently only 9% of BC’s economy is circular in nature, with too few measures in place to address the other 91% of materials still following the linear take-make-waste path.

A circular economy strategy would provide the vision and framework to adequately prioritize and identify policy initiatives capable of addressing the systems change necessary. These include addressing product design, shortening supply chains and expanding circular material management such as repair, re-use, sharing and remanufacturing capacity. A comprehensive circular economy strategy with benchmarked targets for increasing circularity would provide a clearer road map of what needs to be accomplished, allowing the province to best utilize its powers in supporting local governments in tackling the waste issue and create sustainable jobs.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorse the following resolution and submit this resolution for consideration at the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities and the Union of BC Municipalities:

Whereas the provisioning and management of goods and food consumed by BC communities produces excessive and unnecessary quantities of waste, pollution and carbon emissions that threatens environmental health;

And whereas the concept of a Circular Economy provides a vision and framework to design out waste and pollution, keep products and materials in use and regenerate natural systems to help BC communities move towards Zero Waste;

And whereas the province has yet to develop a comprehensive strategy to transition BC’s economy to a circular one;

Therefore, be it resolved that UBCM request that the province of BC develop a provincial Circular Economy strategy.

Respectfully submitted,



Councillor Loveday