



Environmental groups calling on Big Plastic to drop its lawsuit against federal government this Plastic-Free July

NGOs take aim at Canada's biggest plastic producers for their trashy tactics to stop meaningful action on plastic waste

TORONTO, ON, July 8, 2021 – This Plastic-Free July, Canadian environmental groups are calling out the top three producers of plastic in Canada: NOVA Chemicals, Dow Chemical and Imperial Oil/ExxonMobil. These three companies are [suing the federal government](#) in an effort to stop the federal action plan to reduce plastic pollution. This trashy tactic is aimed at protecting Big Plastic's bottom line.

"Big Plastic likes to pretend that plastic waste is someone else's fault: consumers, litterers and municipal waste management," said Karen Wirsig, Program Manager for Plastics at Environmental Defence. "But the real issue is that there's already too much plastic and the industry wants to prevent the government from doing anything about it. That's why our #1 tip to Canadians this Plastic-Free July is to tell Big Plastic to drop its lawsuit."

In May, the federal government [listed plastic manufactured items as a toxic substance](#) under the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act* (CEPA), paving the way for regulations to ban certain single-use plastic items and to require new plastic products to include recycled content. Environmental groups are urging the government to vigorously defend the CEPA listing against the Big Plastic lawsuit and move ahead swiftly to implement the promised regulations.

"Canadians overwhelmingly support government action on plastics," said Lilly Woodbury, Regional Coordinator at Surfrider Foundation. "The most important thing we can do is to help ensure the government follows through on its promise to tackle plastic pollution."

NOVA, Dow and Imperial Oil/Exxon Mobil make about [three-quarters of the plastic polymers produced in Canada](#). The polymers are then turned into plastic goods, including packaging that is often used once and thrown away. Every day in Canada, at least 8,000 tonnes of plastic waste is sent for landfilling or incineration or is dumped directly into the natural environment.

"The plastic pollution crisis we're facing is not the fault of individuals, and it's outrageous that we're made to feel like the culprits when it comes to plastic pollution," said Emily Alfred, Waste Campaigner at the Toronto Environmental Alliance. "Companies have been churning out single-use plastics for years with no restrictions and no consequences, and now they're fighting regulations that would change that."

“Plastic pollution threatens the vitally important Great Lakes - showing up in drinking water and even beer - not to mention choking wildlife ,” said Lucy Bain, Communications Coordinator at Sierra Club Ontario. “We know we can’t recycle our way out of this mess. We need less plastic and that’s why federal regulation is necessary. Reducing plastic pollution will generate savings for businesses, towns, and governments, and generate tens of thousands of new jobs in Canada - a great way to build back better after COVID.”

“Big Plastic continues to intentionally mislead Canadians to believe plastic pollution is their fault and their responsibility, so it can continue to profit at the expense of biodiversity and human health,” said Laura Yates, Plastics Campaigner at Greenpeace Canada. “The truth is that Canadians can’t fix the problem that industry made and continues to make, and individuals mustn’t be held accountable for fixing the problem. Big Plastic is pushing for a *circular economy for plastics*, but there’s no such thing. Our only way out of this crisis is phasing out single-use plastics and petrochemical investments, and to embrace and support reusable models. Canadians need to support the federal government to move forward with implementing the proposed single-use plastic ban and tell big plastic they’ve had enough lies.”

“Recycling alone cannot solve the global plastic crisis,” said Olga Speranskaya, Co-Director at Health and Environment Justice Support. “A drastic reduction in the production of plastic, phasing out single-use plastic, a shift toward reusable goods, and an end to the use of toxic additives are realistic ways to address plastic pollution.”

“It’s going to take collective effort to solve the plastic pollution problem,” said Lisa Gue, National Policy Manager at David Suzuki Foundation. “We need the federal government to make good on its promise to ban non-essential single-use plastics by 2021, and we need industry to stop squabbling over first steps.”

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The David Suzuki Foundation (davidsuzuki.org) is a leading Canadian environmental non-profit organization, collaborating with all people in Canada, including government and business, to conserve the environment and find solutions that will create a sustainable Canada through evidence-based research, public engagement and policy work. The Foundation operates in English and French, with offices in Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal.

[Greenpeace](#) is an independent campaigning organization, which uses non-violent, creative confrontation to expose global environmental problems, and to force the solutions which are essential to a green and peaceful future. Greenpeace's goal is to ensure the ability of the Earth to nurture life in all its diversity. Therefore Greenpeace seeks to: protect biodiversity in all its forms, – prevent pollution and abuse of the earth's ocean, land, air and fresh water, – end all nuclear threats, promote peace, global disarmament and non-violence.

[HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT JUSTICE SUPPORT](#) (HEJSupport) is a non-profit organization dedicated to achieving a healthy environment and environmental justice for people and communities affected by chemical pollution and related environmental degradation.

About the [Toronto Environmental Alliance \(TEA\)](#): For over 30 years, the Toronto Environmental Alliance has campaigned locally to find solutions to Toronto's environmental problems. As a not-for-profit organization, we work with communities to advocate for a green, healthy and equitable city.

The [SIERRA CLUB CANADA FOUNDATION](#) is a grassroots organization that empowers people to be leaders in protecting, restoring and enjoying healthy and safe ecosystems, with a "think globally, act locally" philosophy. The Ontario Chapter focuses on a wide variety of issues across the province including, Great Lakes conservation, increasing awareness of air quality issues, research on the Ring of Fire region that occupies the Nishnawbe Aski Nation, Treaty Nine Territory and environmental campaigns and conservation projects within the Peel Region.

The SURFRIDER FOUNDATION mission is the protection and enjoyment of the ocean, beaches and waves, which is enacted through a powerful activist network. We ensure clean water, healthy ocean and coastlines and accessible beaches for all to enjoy by finding lasting solutions to the threats the ocean faces.

About ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENCE CANADA (environmentaldefence.ca): Environmental Defence Canada is a leading Canadian environmental advocacy organization that works with government, industry and individuals to defend clean water, a safe climate and healthy communities.